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THERE have been, and still are, three crises—a financial, an economic and a political. The financial is to be solved for the time being in a way which, in our opinion, is calculated to intensify the world's economic predicament. We argue elsewhere that the late Government had another and better course open to it to meet the immediate financial situation. And in the long run how can a world depression, due to "over-production," be remedied by a policy of drastic reductions? That is the policy for a famine or a siege, not for a surplus of wealth and a lack of purchasing power. The cheers seem somewhat premature. We know that the pound sterling is, for the present, saved. We know no more than that, except that the future is dark for all of us.

* * *

One immediate result of the events of the last week is to make a strong and determined Labour Opposition. The fact that Labour leaders were themselves ready to accept the policy of all-round reductions in order to meet the currency crisis will not, we imagine, be much emphasised on Labour platforms. There were, in fact, three parties in the Cabinet. All were determined to balance the Budget, and all agreed, unwisely in our view, not to run the risk of attempting to stabilise the pound at a lower level. It should surely have been clear from the beginning that any scheme acceptable to the Tories must split the Labour movement from end to end, and that any scheme, however drastic, accepted by the Labour movement would be repudiated by the Tories. A number of schemes for balancing the Budget were put forward: an agreed scheme involving about 45 per cent. of cuts and 55 per cent. of new taxation was unanimously accepted on Friday. The Government was informed by its banking advisers that it was inadequate and that since it did not include a cut in unemployment benefit itself—it included large economies in conditions and period of benefit and an increase in contributions—it would not be sufficient to restore confidence and procure the necessary credits from America. Some Ministers, including several now in opposition, were ready to accept a 10 per cent. cut in the dole; others were not. The Government was on the point of resigning *en bloc*. Mr. MacDonald, however, was persuaded to form a Government with the Tories and Liberals. Apart from Mr. Snowden and Mr. Thomas and Lord Sankey, whose entrance into the Cabinet is announced to be due to the important rôle he has to play at the Round Table Conference, the whole Labour movement has almost as one man repudiated the new National Government and its policy.

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This opposition, now endorsed by the unanimous approval of the joint meeting of the Trade Union and Labour Party organisations, is likely to become more intense when the extent of the economies aimed at by the new Government is realised. The Government is likely to ask the House, when it meets on September 8th, for special powers to issue emergency decrees having the force of law. It will then markedly resemble the Brüning Government in Germany—a mild dictatorship supported by the bulk of middle-class opinion and existing to obey the demands of bankers and creditors at home and abroad. The full economy programme probably involves a saving of some £180,000,000. A frontal attack on education and on the social services, and a drastic cut in the dole and on salaries, are the first necessary ingredients. How far Mr. MacDonald is willing to go in this direction we do not know. But since sacrifices are to come from all, and since no economies can suffice by themselves, there must also be increases in taxation. How far the Tories will agree to these we do not know. And since both economies and taxes will be insufficient, the remedy of a tariff must sooner or later arise. And against that Mr. Snowden and the Liberals are unalterably opposed. It may be hard for this Government—sometimes said to be only in power for a few weeks—to break up. For when will "confidence" really be sufficiently restored to permit of an election? It will be hard, too, we imagine, for the Government to remain sufficiently united to satisfy the wishes of the *Times* and other papers which hope that it will remain long in office and set this country permanently on the path of sound capitalist finance.

* * *

The lines on which Opposition policy is to be framed are already clear enough. In spite of the best efforts of the new Government the issue is bound to appear as one between the rich and the poor, unless indeed it is prepared for swingeing increases in income tax and super tax and a special tax on *rentiers* and a reduction of armament expenditure as well as of social services. But that might not be held to be the best way to restore confidence. Dr Addison has already opened the attack with a speech in which he formally assails "banking dictatorship"—an attack, which, as we argue elsewhere, is really only to a limited extent justified. But the issue behind that—whether a Labour Government is in the future to control the banks or to submit, not to their dictatorship but to the dictatorship of all who fear to lose their money by Socialist policy—is a sound and major issue. The exact alternative policy the Opposition will adopt is not yet clear, but we shall be in a better position to examine the new taxation proposals put forward by the T.U.C. and other bodies when the details are more fully explained.

* * *

Astonishing news from the Continent has passed unnoticed amid our own preoccupations. First came news from France that a treaty of non-aggression with Russia was under way. The Quai d'Orsay turned our incredulity to amazement by pronouncing the report "premature": the treaty had not yet been *signed!* It had in fact been initialed, which is much about the same thing. While we were wondering what on earth Poland—France's eastern "bulwark of democracy"—would do, came news that Poland herself had drafted a pact of non-aggression with Russia and presented it to Moscow. Meanwhile in Hungary, after over ten years of revisionist policy, Count Bethlen's Government was driven to accept the £5,000,000 loan arranged by France, and was succeeded by Count Karolyi's new Cabinet, friendly to France. Austria-Hungary weaned from adhesion to Germany and the Russian half of the Russo-German nut-crackers broken on the Polish nut—quite a good week's work by the Quai d'Orsay! No wonder German extremists talk of an *Isolierungspolitik* abroad.

* * *

Count Bethlen's resignation has suited the French so well that there have even been rumours that he was forced to resign at French dictation and that his removal was necessary in order to prepare the way for a monarchist restoration which had received a French blessing. There is only the faintest glimmer of reality in all this. The crisis in Hungary, like the crisis in England, was financial. When the collapse came, Count Bethlen, who had failed to forestall it, had to find immediate credits, and, France being the only lender available, he was forced to apply for French gold. Now France rarely makes a loan without imposing some form of political obligation. It is possible, therefore, that Count Bethlen, who has commitments with other nations—notably, Italy—found it convenient to carry out these obligations personally. But it is absurd to say that he has been ousted from politics. He made the loan with France. He resigned of his own free will. Indeed he was largely instrumental in forming the Karolyi Government which has replaced his own. That Government is to all intents and purposes a Bethlen Government. Indeed, so long as the system of dictatorship remains in Hungary, Count Bethlen, who is by far its ablest exponent, will be found directing it either openly or behind the scenes.

* * *

Meanwhile, Germany, already committed to an economy campaign of bitter and dangerous stringency, is watching the English crisis with grave anxiety. That its effect on the German situation will be unfavourable seems to be assumed in all quarters. Whether the new National Government remains or not, whether there are new elections or not, the Germans are convinced that either by "cuts" in wages and in unemployment benefit or by the introduction of tariffs England is now committed to a policy of reduced imports and increased exports. Such a policy, coming at a moment when Germany herself is faced with the necessity of increasing her own export trade, must inevitably render the prospect of recovery in Germany more difficult. English purchases of German goods will be reduced. England will be a stronger and more dangerous competitor of Germany in the export trade. It may be said that this is no concern of ours. Yet it illustrates very clearly the vicious circle in which the wheels of international finance now revolve. Until some solution of the international credit problem has been found, measures for the relief of one nation can be only temporary and indeed may create fresh difficulties in other nations. The credit problem is an international one. It can only be solved internationally.

Nothing spectacular was contained in the report of the Basle Committee of Experts appointed by the Bank for International Settlements to inquire into the further credit needs of Germany, and to study the possibility of converting a portion of the short-term credits into long-term credits. But at last we have the melancholy facts clearly set out without political bias, and are made to realise that the German financial crisis has not yet been solved. The Committee has given practical effect to the proposal of the London Conference that arrangements should be made for continuing the short-term credits already accorded to Germany. At the invitation of the Committee the Bankers met and a six-months' prolongation of existing credits has been arranged, subject to the renewal of the Central Bank credit of $100,000,000 which was accorded in July.

* * *

The present agreement provides for two additional forms of security. One is to associate direct responsibility on the part of the final credit-taker with that of the debtor bank itself. The other is to secure the guarantee of the Deutsche Golddiskont Bank for a certain proportion of the credits. The Committee arrived at the conclusion that the existing volume of Germany's foreign credits should be maintained, and that part, at all events, of the capital which has been withdrawn should be replaced from foreign sources. It is obvious that, if the additional capital required were supplied in the form of short-term credits, Germany would be faced with a still greater difficulty at the end of six months when the period of the prolongation of existing credits comes to an end. Yet the Committee sees no chance of providing the additional credits in the form of long-term loans unless the political relations between Germany and her neighbours are put on a more satisfactory footing, and unless the international payments to be made by Germany will be " such as not to imperil the maintenance of her financial stability." In other words, the burden of reparation payments must be removed before the six months' period of grace has expired.

* * *

Having momentarily appeased the Catalans by handing their statute to the commission in charge of the draft constitution, the Madrid Government has had this week to face the Basques, the traditional spearhead of extreme Roman Catholicism. The Monarchists have been playing on Basque antagonism to the religious clauses in the constitution, and several Basque Catholic papers have been suspended for advocating armed rebellion. The situation is apparently well in hand; but there is in any case a salutary fear of anti-Catholic reprisals. But the bigger problem of reducing the preposterous political claims of the Church all over Spain is going to be extremely difficult. The Hierarchy, while full of soothing disclaimers, is making a conciliatory policy almost impossible. Only this week documents seized from the Vicar-General of Vittoria have obliged the Government to issue a decree stopping the clandestine sale of Church property, and a breach with the Vatican is certain if the intrigues of certain members of the Hierarchy continue. Spain has for years been the dumping ground of refugee priests and nuns from Mexico and Portugal, and has been priest-ridden to an extent that few English Roman Catholics would tolerate in their own country. Even under the Monarchy the number of religious orders was by a subterfuge greatly in excess of that allowed by the law. But the Prime Minister is himself a Catholic and it may be in the end that the Cortes, remembering the failure of earlier attempts at a radical solution, will content itself merely with pruning the Church's monopolist claims and with ensuring a genuine freedom of conscience for all minorities.

* * *

The official arrangements for the Indian Round Table Conference remain unaffected by the change of Government except that new members will take the place of Mr. Henderson and Mr. Benn. Meanwhile, the latest news from Simla is more hopeful. In spite of his indisposition, the Viceroy has given Mr. Gandhi an interview; and the procedure followed appears to have the same refreshing informality that marked the conversations between the Mahatma and Lord Irwin. Whatever is the precise nature of Mr. Gandhi's difficulties about the Delhi Pact, it is obvious that friendly, personal discussion is all to the good. Most important of all is the decision—a final one we may hope—of Mr. Gandhi to come to England and attend the Conference himself. It has been fairly evident that this has always been his own desire; and while we would not underestimate the gravity of the opposition he has to overcome, we are sure it is to India's advantage that he should overcome it. If he does not attend, too many people in India would consider that the decisions of the Conference, however good, were referable to him for confirmation; and on the undesirability of this we need not dilate.

* * *

The latest attempt to raise prices by restriction of output—that of certain oil interests in the United States—is going ahead merrily, to the accompaniment of rioting and martial law. There is now, moreover, a demand for the exclusion of imported oil, or for a prohibitive tariff designed, in conjunction with restricted output, to raise domestic prices. Meanwhile, the proposal that the American farmer should destroy a third of the new cotton crop has been laughed out of court; and the Federal Farm Board is no nearer disposing of its surplus wheat, even though, for want of it, millions of Chinamen are threatened with death from starvation. Russia, unable to get foreign credits for machinery, has to export, in order to pay for her imports, foodstuffs which she badly needs at home, and thus adds to the glut in the world's markets. What an opportunity for a satirist! If Captain Gulliver went on his travels to-day, he would find stranger things than ever befell him in Brobdingnag or Laputa. A mad world, and maybe a world nearer sheer collapse than most of us yet realise!

POLITICS AND THE POUND

IN many respects the situation which confronted the Cabinet was like that of August, 1914. Then as now the crisis sprang from a distant event in Austria which soon involved this country; then as now members of the Cabinet were confronted with a demand to carry out a policy which contradicted the whole of their political philosophy, which made nonsense of all they had said and worked for. Then as now there were members who said: "Well, if that policy is to be carried out it must be carried out by others, not by me." Then it was a decision to fight the Germans: to-day it is a decision to abandon the whole movement towards socialism because of a threat to the stability of our currency. In 1914 Mr. MacDonald refused to join a War Cabinet: Mr. Henderson accepted. Mr. MacDonald was denounced as a traitor: Mr. Henderson applauded. In leading articles in the *Times,* for instance, Mr. MacDonald's patriotism is extolled, while Mr. Henderson is denounced as a man who put party before country. Meanwhile, in Labour circles all over the country Mr. MacDonald is being denounced—against Mr. Henderson's expressed wish—for betraying his party. Neither denunciation of Mr. MacDonald nor of Mr. Henderson is just.

Mr. MacDonald's decision to form a Cabinet in conjunction with the Liberals and Tories seems to us a mistake, just as it would have been a mistake for him as a pacifist to join a War Cabinet in 1914. For he must inevitably find himself at war with the whole of organised labour, and not only with organised labour, but with all those, in all classes, who believe that the policy of reducing the purchasing power of the consumer to meet a situation of over-production is silly economics. Few people yet realise how extreme and drastic the cuts in the standard of life of all but the bondholder and of certain industrialists must be if the policy of deflation is to have even an apparent success. An effort is being made to represent the issue as merely one of a 10 per cent. reduction in the dole, as if patriotism meant cutting the dole and refusal to cut it could only be based on a cowardly subservience to the electorate. Actually, the reduction in the dole is in itself comparatively unimportant. Mr. MacDonald is quite right in saying that a 10 per cent. reduction, in view of the change in prices, is not so terrible a measure. We oppose it and have always argued against it in these columns, because it is only a first step, the crucial beginning of a policy of reductions, disastrous, we believe, alike for England and the rest of the world. And if Labour is to carry out a capitalist policy because there is a danger of a flight from the pound—probably exaggerated as we argue elsewhere—how can any socialist policy ever be carried out in any circumstances? That threat has always been used and will again be used with far more effect on every occasion that we wish to extend the social services or continue the process of redistributing wealth from the rich to the poor. Such redistribution does, of course, by its very nature mean a loss of "confidence" among investors: Socialism does mean a threat to the capitalist system. That is its definition.

On the personal side we may respect Mr. MacDonald's position. He has nothing to make out of it: he goes and goes consciously away from his party. He must find himself out of sympathy with the majority of his colleagues in the new Cabinet, and he will not find it easy to dissociate himself from their views on many subjects. Mr. Thomas has always been a Conservative at heart: he believes in tariffs and naturally consorts with big business. His presence in a Socialist Cabinet has long been a subject of jest. As for Mr. Snowden, he is a Liberal, and his views differ not much, if at all, from those of Sir Herbert Samuel. He and the Liberals, armed with a guarantee against a tariff, feel secure at the moment. But they are soon likely to find themselves in a very awkward corner. The Tories will easily co-operate in doing the unpopular, dirty work—in cutting the dole, forcing down wages and cutting education and the social services. In doing so they will probably increase unemployment, and the various remedies for unemployment must speedily come up for discussion. The Tory remedy is tariffs, and in the depth of depression to which the policy of deflation will soon have reduced the country, a very popular policy it will be. The Liberal cure for unemployment has been an extension of public works, a policy of spending, and that they have now renounced. An excellent tactical position for the Tories! To have used the name and prestige of Mr. MacDonald and the Liberals for the unpopular task of cutting, and then to be able to offer tariffs to restore business. But where will the Liberals be and where Mr. MacDonald?

When the events which brought this new Government into existence are fully known, we shall find that party politics played a larger part than has yet been revealed in the press. It is too soon to tell the whole story, but there are several facts which we may tell and which illustrate, well enough, the manœuvres which were designed to split and discredit the Labour Party. On Friday the Cabinet had completed its task of finding ways of balancing the Budget. "Cuts," involving large sacrifices from the unemployed, but not an actual cut in standard benefit, accounted for £56,000,000. The remainder was to be met by taxation. These proposals were submitted to the bankers. They replied that they were insufficient, if the necessary credits were to be obtained from America. Another £25,000,000 or £30,000,000 must be raised, the bulk of which must come from the dole. The Cabinet was then asked to accept a 10 per cent. reduction of unemployment insurance in spite of a pledge given to the Trade Unions and to the Labour Party that they would not cut the dole itself. Since the position of the pound was now represented as extremely urgent, many members of the Cabinet were prepared to go as far as this. The Tories were asked whether they would be satisfied, and the Government was informed that if this were submitted to the House of Commons they would not oppose it on second reading, but would reserve for themselves the right of moving amendments, if necessary, to increase the "cut," in Committee. Here, indeed, would have been a fine situation for the Labour Party! To have accepted it would have been to be out manœuvred, discredited and ridiculed. They would, in any case, have had the utmost difficulty, even as a united Cabinet, in persuading their followers to accept a 10 per cent. cut as a final reduction, only then to find themselves saddled with the responsibility for a cut which would have proved in Committee not final at all! The Tories played their cards well; the Labour Party may be grateful to Mr. Henderson for saving it from disruption and discredit.

WAS IT A BANKERS' CONSPIRACY?

THE main cry of the new Socialist opposition party will be "save the country from the dictatorship of the banks." How much truth will there be in the charge of a bank conspiracy? The drain of gold was not fiction—it existed. Without a policy of economy we should have been driven off the gold standard. In our view this was desirable, provided that the pound could have been stabilised at a reasonable level. But once the Government had determined to maintain sterling at parity, the methods by which it should do so were necessarily dictated by the banks. They were, in point of fact, dictated not only in general but in detail. We have it on unimpeachable authority that the Government were informed that the pound could only be saved by further credits from America, and that American institutions and investors would not find further credits unless the British Government agreed, not merely to balance the Budget, but, specifically, to cut down unemployment insurance. England had, in fact, accepted the position of a debtor nation whose policy must be dictated by its outside creditors, and we are being treated by American finance as we ourselves have been accustomed to treat Turkey in the past and as Germany has been treated ever since the war.

This "dictatorship" of the banks was, therefore, partly in the nature of technical advice that, since the dole had become the symbol of England's precarious position, only cutting the dole would suffice to restore confidence in the pound sterling. Mixed up with this there was, of course, plenty of politics. It was a heaven-sent opportunity to prove, what the City has always maintained, that a Labour Government means ruin, and, by amusing irony, to make a Labour Government cut the dole, repudiate all its promises and play the Tory game. We may be sure that the dislike of American investors for supporting a British Government which had not cut the dole was not discouraged by the conversations with British bankers. The Government, in fact, had for itself, asked to be dictated to. The dictatorship was not so much that of an outside bully as that of a wife. Having married the gold standard, the Government had to adjust its habits to suit its partner. But the marriage was voluntary.

The essence of a crisis of confidence is that its gravity depends not on facts, but on the feelings and actions of the financiers themselves. There was no good reason why there should be any flight from the pound—except the fact that such a flight was beginning. The financiers themselves encourage an incipient panic, and then give the panic as a reason why the country must be governed in accordance with their will. Great Britain has ample reserves; there is more British money abroad than foreign money in Great Britain: we have big reserves of overseas investments; and we are not, even to-day, living beyond our income. But we cannot recall our resources which are in use overseas without creating chaos in Europe, including a big risk of bringing Germany down; whereas it is possible, not only for foreigners to take back a large part of their short-term money from London, but also for Englishmen in a panic to begin removing British money overseas. If these two things happen, we cannot remain on the gold standard, in the sense of allowing free export of gold, or preserve the stability of our exchanges. And, if we decide to go off the gold standard, we can only avert the danger of collapse by a drastic State control of the entire money market and the banking system. But all these unpleasant facts arise because the financiers have got into a panic, and not because there is, apart from their panic, anything desperate in our national situation.

Indeed, the handling of the political crisis and the comments upon it in such newspapers as the *Times* have been such as to make the situation very much worse than it need have been. The prominence given to M. Rueff's very dubious calculations about the effect of the dole on unemployment, the gloomy views of M. Siegfried and the continuous propaganda of City Editors might have been designed to hasten the crisis. All this scurrying to and fro, all this talk about national bankruptcy, has been calculated to provoke just that flight from the pound which it was supposedly designed to prevent.

The Government was not unnaturally frightened by the drain of gold. But if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not himself been a banker in attitude and philosophy, if the Government had gone on with its own plans to balance its budget in its own way, neither consulting Mr. Baldwin nor kowtowing to Mr. Montagu Norman, there was at least a good chance that confidence would have been sufficiently restored and that there would have been no flight from the pound on a scale that could not have been dealt with by stern but quite practicable measures. Economies all round would, no doubt, have been necessary as well as increased taxation, but there need have been no proposals so drastic as to drive the mass of the Labour movement into irreconcilable opposition. If the Government had stood firm the awful things predicted by American and British bankers would probably never have occurred. The flight from the pound would not have been unmanageable. The domestic export of capital could have been stopped and in the last resort part of our overseas investments could have been mobilised.

As matters now stand, very serious harm has been done. Great Britain has given the world to understand—quite wrongly—that she is at the last gasp. Our financial difficulties have not been in any way surmounted. The world economic depression is nowhere near its end; and budgetary difficulties are bound to increase, and not diminish, for some time to come. The new "National" Government has begun to slide down a steep and slippery slope to which no bottom can yet be seen. The bankers have dictated to it to-day; and what is to prevent them from exacting still more if the situation grows worse? The country is to be committed to a purely negative policy of economies that are bound to add seriously to the numbers of the unemployed. At the same time it is to cut down the "dole," and thereby in effect issue a general invitation to employers to reduce wages. Purchasing power in the home market is thus to be doubly restricted; and this policy is presumably to continue until the price-level has been forced down into some unknown abyss in which what the economists call "equilibrium" is supposed to lurk.

This, of course, is precisely the policy which was damned up hill and down dale by the Macmillan Committee only a month or two ago. It was described by them as a policy of despair, likely to lead to repudiation or revolution.

In our view, then, the policy on which the new Government of Mr. MacDonald is based is radically wrong. It is wrong from a national, and still more from an international, point of view. It is wrong internationally, not only because the removal of the Labour Government is likely to wreck the last remaining chances of the Indian and Disarmament conferences, but also because Great Britain's plunge into the policy of restricting purchasing power is certain to intensify world depression, force prices lower, and set up a fiercer rivalry in wage-reductions all over the world. Mr. MacDonald's intentions are above suspicion, but the road to hell for the British economic system is paved with such intentions.

NOTES ON THE SITUATION

1. It is true that drastic reductions in the Budget had become a *sine qua non* of the maintenance of the gold parity of sterling.

2. It is probable that public opinion is not ready for devaluation, whether or not devaluation is desirable on its merits. This is so for several reasons. As it is a matter very difficult to debate in public with candour, opinion is unprepared. The idea of devaluation carries with it for the ordinary man all the exaggerated terrors of something the consequences of which are unknown to him. National pride is deeply involved. In any case the decision involves a difficult balance of advantage and disadvantage which most people feel themselves incompetent to make.

3. Thus it is natural that very strong forces should insist that one more struggle be made to retain gold parity. If the effort is to be made, it should be made with energy and decision.

4. Consequently it is not for those who doubt the wisdom of the decision or hesitate before all that it implies and symbolises to attempt to carry it out. If they believe that for various reasons it is inevitable that the attempt be made, then it is for them to make way for those who fully believe both in the policy itself and in its necessary consequences. Thus if the Labour Government were not prepared (as they were not) deliberately to abandon the present gold standard, it was their duty to resign. That it was open to them to do so, is one of the advantages of the party system, especially in present circumstances when a majority could be found for a new Government without a General Election.

5. This is particularly true in the present case. For though some parts of the Economy Programme, including the cut in the dole, may be in themselves justifiable, they stand, in actual practice, for a point of view which is unacceptable. The reasons for "economy" which weigh heavily with those who are enthusiastic for it are mixed reasons. Those who like deflation and those who dislike State action get their innings. Thus anyone who actively participates in enforcing the economy necessarily becomes involved in these points of view. In particular, the abandonment of State-directed or State-assisted capital development schemes, and the postponement of a tariff, mean a sole reliance on competitive wage-reductions as a means of remedying unemployment.

6. The actual results of "economy" will be disappointing for the reasons which I have recently explained in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. In some directions its immediate effect will be to make matters worse and it may be expected (unless it is accompanied by a tariff) to aggravate unemployment.

7. Whilst the "economy" Budget is a *sine qua non* of maintaining gold parity, it is unlikely that it will be sufficient by itself. As a result of recent events, we are probably faced, or soon will be, with the definite choice between devaluation and a heavy reduction of all kinds of money-incomes—which was by no means certain even three months ago. But not all those who are now supporting "economy" realise this, or that "economy" is logically only the first step in a far-reaching policy to make deflation effective. If the effort is successful without too much stress and strain, too many insolvencies or too great social injustice, well and good. But if not, or if the public, when they discover what deflation involves, refuse to give all the support which will be necessary, it is well that there should be some organised political force to which they can turn. After a perplexed and anxious fashion, issue has now been joined on a matter of great importance, both in itself and because of its implications, about which opinions can differ for the sort of deep reasons, difficult to express adequately, which genuinely divide us.

J. M. KEYNES.

OPPRESSION IN POLAND

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

AMONG abuses in post-war Europe the worst are the cumulative violations of the "Minorities Treaty" by the Polish State. With only a very few shining exceptions, like Estonia, all the new European States (and some of the old as well) have committed similar violations. But in Poland they have acquired a primary international importance, both by reason of their barbarism and their abundance, and also by reason of Poland's peculiar position between Russia and Germany. Poland has become a test case by which the Minorities Treaties as a system stand or fall, and with them the whole political and social order in Eastern Europe.

The new European frontiers are anything but ideal. But whether to change them is practical politics may be doubted. Old wounds are not healed by being reopened. The wrong done and the dangers created by these frontiers were recognised by those who made them. The wrong—to some extent inevitable, for in regions with mixed populations there can be no frontiers that are ethnologically perfect—was that large, far too large, populations came under alien rule. The dangers arose out of this injustice—dangers of the kind that this country has known in Ireland and in India.

The Poles were therefore required to sign a Treaty in which they pledged themselves to respect the rights and liberties of those alien populations—the Minorities—that came under their rule. The Treaty was also signed by Great Britain and the principal Allied Powers, and it was placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations. The biggest of these Polish Minorities are the Ukrainians—they number from five million (the Polish figure) to seven million (the Ukrainian figure) and have a language, a civilisation, and a national consciousness (as intense as the Irish) of their own. Although, like the Poles themselves, they took up arms for national independence when the Austro-Hungarian Empire foundered, they were denied that independence in the Peace Settlement. The wrong and the danger of this refusal was realised at the time, and the Powers gave the Poles the sovereignty over the Ukrainians because the Poles had recognised the necessity of Ukrainian Home Rule—indeed, there is a law providing for Ukrainian "local autonomy" on the Polish Statute Books. That the law has never been carried out and, even if it were, would but confer a sham autonomy does not alter the fact that the principle of Ukrainian Home Rule was recognised by the Poles themselves.

The Minorities Treaty and implicit pledge to grant Ukrainian Home Rule are the conditions for the very existence of the Polish State within its present frontiers. One might, therefore, have supposed that the Treaty would have been respected, that the Poles could not really have afforded to disregard it, all the more so as it bears the signature of England and France, and was placed under the guarantee of the League. A special procedure and apparatus exist to secure observance.

If this Treaty is not sacrosanct, then no treaty is. If it is challenged, then the principles by virtue of which present-day Poland exists are challenged and the whole problem of "frontier revision" inevitably acquires a new and eminently practical importance. And if the League is unable to secure observance, then the principles on which the League is based are challenged also.

Twelve years have passed since the Minorities Treaty was signed. Not a month, not a week, hardly a day, in those twelve years, has passed without some violation of that Treaty by the Poles. Violation reached its climax last year. The facts about the "Pacification of Eastern Galicia" (as the sanguinary outrages and the destruction of property by Polish cavalry and constabulary in the Ukraine last autumn are officially termed) are now so familiar and so indubitably established that they need not be repeated here. The outrages committed in Polish Upper Silesia are equally familiar. Well-known, too, are the attempts at denial, first, and then, when denial was found to be useless, at excuse and palliation—the wretched stuff produced by the "Polish Press Bureau" in London, for example, and the frothing stream of propaganda that pours down on newspaper offices and on Members of Parliament. Less familiar is the terrorisation of the White Russian minority by the Poles, though it may not always remain so, for a primitive peasant population that is hardly aware of the League's existence and has never had any experience of democratic institutions may find other and more dramatic means of calling the world's attention to its wrongs.

But whether familiar or not, the facts are there. Some of them—for example, the Silesian outrages—have been established by the League itself. And yet the violations go on as though the Minorities Treaty, the League, and public opinion did not exist. Thanks to Mr. Henderson the Poles were left in no doubt at the last meeting of the Council that the atrocities committed in the Ukraine were a serious matter and that the Poles had better compose their quarrel with the Ukrainians before the next meeting of the Council. Representations of particular severity were made at Geneva as a result of the petition—found to be fully justified—of the German Minority in Upper Silesia. The Committee of Three, appointed by the Council to inquire into the working of the Polish "agrarian reform law," found that the law was applied with unfair discrimination against German landowners. The evasions and falsehoods with which the Polish Government tried to hoodwink the eminent and dignified jurists of the Committee are very amusing to read—they were exposed by the *Manchester Guardian* the other day when it published the relevant correspondence that passed between the Committee and the Polish Government.

But representations, inquiries, and publicity have all been in vain. The Poles have made no serious attempt to settle their dispute with the Ukrainians. Nothing has been done to punish those responsible for the atrocities or to compensate the victims for bodily injuries and damaged property. In Upper Silesia and in the so-called "Corridor," the disabilities inflicted on the German Minority have increased instead of diminished. Terroristic pressure, arrests, beatings, unfair discrimination, economic boycott —they all go on, as though nothing whatever had been said. They all work like the co-ordinated parts of a tyrannical system that presses now on individuals, now on whole categories of persons. Even the rulings of the Polish court will sometimes flout the Treaty (in this respect, too, Poland does not stand alone). One only has to imagine what would happen if Germany were to pass a law contravening the Treaty of Versailles, to realise that there are still two measures of international justice to-day —one for the victors, another for the vanquished. The mere doubt that the Austro-German customs agreement does not conform to international law was enough to create a hostility that has not died down even yet.

But apart from any judicial considerations, how can there be any confidence in Poland's future if the Minorities —who make up a third of her population—are driven to think only one thought above all other thoughts, namely, how to shake off intolerable oppression? Of what use is Poland's great army when, as everyone at all acquainted with the present state of Poland knows, whole divisions will mutiny the moment war breaks out, and enemies will arise, not only in the East or from the West, but in thousands of towns and villages behind the Polish lines? How can there be an enduring peace between Germany and Poland if the German Minority is oppressed year in, year out, and all the German Government can do at Geneva remains unavailing? How can Germany remain in the League if one of the League's primary functions, the protection of Minorities, remains unfulfilled? And how can there be a League at all without Germany?

Let us suppose that Russia completes her Five Year Plan with some success, that she is free to develop an active foreign policy, that she can afford to take risks she could not afford to take now, that in the eastern regions of Poland the White Russian and Ukrainian peasants break out into open insurrection, that Polish troops arrive to shoot and burn, that the insurgents in the extremity of desperation (all else having failed) appeal to Soviet Russia for help. That this appeal would have a wide popular response in Soviet White Russia and the Soviet Ukraine was proved last autumn when there were mass-meetings and demonstrations throughout the Soviet Ukraine to protest against the "pacification" of fellow-Ukrainians just across the Polish border. Is it not likely that the Russian Government, invoking the principles of the Russian Revolution, would declare: "This oppression of our fellow-nationals, who are also workers and peasants, across the Polish border is intolerable and must cease once and for all." Who, if such a situation were to arise, could honestly deny that the Russian Government would be quite right? And let us suppose that at the same time the German Government were to declare: "We can no longer allow *our* fellow-Germans across the Polish border to go on enduring that oppression from which the Western Powers and the League of Nations have failed to save them."

In such a situation Poland could hardly reckon on much sympathy, seeing that she herself would have brought that situation about. She would, no doubt, appeal for help —as she did in 1920—but help so that Poland's frontiers remain as they were before and so that the Minorities can be oppressed all over again must *never* be given. Help, if any, can be given only on condition that there is a new Poland in which (promises, pledges, and treaties having proved worthless) there will be no Minorities to oppress.

Would it not be better if those principles were observed which, although they may seem remote and academic now, are yet the conditions on which Poland came into existence and on which she may pass out of existence? Would it not be better if the Minorities Treaty were kept and if the Ukrainians were given Home Rule before it is too late? And would it not be a good thing if the League and the Assembly were to pay attention to these matters next month, even if they are not on the agenda?

THE HUMAN DORMOUSE

BIOLOGICAL invention, as yet in its infancy, may be expected in the future to solve many of our problems of state. If we have not in the meanwhile scrapped the sorry scheme of things which permits millions of able-bodied persons to remain unoccupied an unsympathetic government may one day decline to undertake the enormous burden of a vastly augmented unemployed section of the population. We have no machinery of state to provide against the fluctuations in the demand for labour, though our economic system does in a measure meet the variation in the productions of foodstuffs by storing against the days when the cold north wind comes. The squirrel, the dormouse, and the brown bear store, as it were, their surplus labour, when there is nothing to do, by preserving themselves in a state of suspended energy, taking up life again where they left off when there is again a field for their activities. We may learn from the animal world quite other lessons than those which La Fontaine taught us. Mr. H. G. Wells, in one of those earlier imaginative romances where he takes his readers to delightfully fantastic and occasionally prophetic utopias, solved the unemployment problem by putting workless people to sleep when industry was slack and arousing them from their slumber when hands were wanted.

The mechanism of hibernation had not been investigated when Wells exploited this fancy, and his sleeping labourers were not made to reach their balmy state by any happy application of a scientific principle, but by the magical means, old as the Odyssey, of eating a plant the virtues of which are not known to the modern pharmacologist. But without having recourse to magic we may adjust to a nicety in the labour world production to consumption so that no one will suffer privation and so that there will always be a reservoir of stored labour; prime ministers, clergymen, publishers, and fishporters to meet any demand. This happy state of affairs is to be brought about by the provision of facilities to enable human beings to hibernate.

Hibernation is not sleep. In sleep the usual bodily processes continue with very little modification. Respiration, the combustion processes, the conversion of starches and sugars into fats, and so on are not appreciably altered, and the body temperature is regulated as in the waking hours. It is common knowledge that the temperature of warm-blooded animals is kept by a complex and curious mechanism at a constant level well above the moderate temperature of an ordinary living room. It remains constant even though their surroundings are chilled to considerably below the freezing point provided that respiration and the bodily chemistry go on in the regular manner. We die of cold not because the fluid content of our body freezes, but because the respiratory centre in the brain, by which the supply of oxygen is regulated, becomes paralysed if the body loses too much of its heat. Normally before this extremity is reached a reflex action, which we know as shivering, sets in. This vigorous muscular motion raises the body temperature and tends to restore it to its usual level.

During their winter "sleep," hibernating animals are cold. Their temperature is not more than a degree or two above that of their surroundings. They breathe, but very slowly. Their respiration rate is as low as one per minute. Their breathing is light. They take in only small quantities of oxygen and give out carbon dioxide in relatively minute amounts. Their excretion of water is also greatly diminished. The heart-beat is slowed down. In the liver the amount of stored glycogen is abnormally high. Glycogen is a starch. It is the form in which sugar carried by the blood to the tissues is temporarily stored up in the liver and the muscles. The percentage of sugar in the blood of any normal animal varies only within very narrow limits. In the hibernating animal it is reduced to a level at which the normal animal could not survive. The unusually low blood-sugar is correlated with a reversal in the ordinary nutritive processes. Instead of the normal conversion of carbohydrates—sugars and starches—into fats, there is a slow but continual conversion of accumulated fat into sugar which tends to store itself in the liver in the form of glycogen. This store becomes rapidly depleted in the process of recovery from the hibernating state and is consumed in raising the animal's body to its normal temperature. During hibernation the animal becomes cold-blooded because the rate of combustion in the tissues is low. The low combustion is a consequence of the small intake of oxygen and the reduced blood-sugar. The animal becomes inactive and, to all objective tests, unconscious, and may remain in this state for months at a time. Should a small quantity of sugar in the form of glucose be injected, the tissues will be more richly supplied, combustion will be increased, the reflex action of shivering will assert itself, the vigorous action will raise the body temperature, the necessary energy being supplied by the stored glycogen in the liver and the oxygen by the gradual establishment of normal breathing—and the animal is himself again.

Perhaps the most important feature of the hibernating mechanism is the diminution of the blood-sugar. The other factors are the reduced temperature and the lowered respiration. Within recent years it has become possible by the discovery of insulin to reduce artificially the amount of sugar in the blood of man or any other mammal by injecting that substance. Insulin is, in fact, a natural secretion of the pancreas by virtue of which the liberation of sugar into the blood of animals is regulated. When the pancreas becomes diseased and ceases to function properly, sufficient insulin is not discharged into the blood stream. Then the sugar content rises faster than the surplus sugar can be excreted by the kidneys and the patient is said to be suffering from diabetes. Such a condition may be induced artificially by the extirpation of the pancreas. It may be remedied partially by the injection of insulin.

If a non-hibernating mammal is subjected to cold until its body temperature falls to about 75° F. it will recover its normal blood-heat spontaneously by means of the shivering reflex. If, however, the cooled animal is treated with insulin, the shivering reflex is inhibited. Again, if the uncooled animal is treated with insulin its blood sugar content falls to a level at which convulsions ensue and, with continued reduction of sugar, death. But if the insulinised animal is cooled down to about 75° F. the convulsions are inhibited. Thus if an animal is both insulinised and cooled, the low temperature and the low blood sugar are possible, though neither state can be maintained singly. The insulin, in fact, abolishes the shivering reflex, and the cooling abolishes the convulsions. With these conditions the subject goes into a state of coma very closely resembling that of a hibernating animal. An injection of glucose will induce shivering and restore the animal to its normal state.

Thus it may be said that non-hibernating animals, cats, dogs, pigs, and men may be made to hibernate. There is, however, one factor which must be managed artificially. It is respiration. The dormouse and his kind continue to respire, albeit at a minimum, until their Spring awakening. The hibernating cat will not last more than fourteen hours. If it were necessary to maintain an animal in its coma for an unlimited period it would not be difficult to employ a simple mechanical apparatus for artificial respiration such as every laboratory counts in its equipment. With such an arrangement, since the organism is reduced to possibly one twentieth of its ordinary biological activity, it may be expected that a man put to "sleep" in this way for fifty years would waste no more than two and a half years of his life and have the advantage of outliving two generations without getting appreciably older. Hibernation for a few months, or a year, until the sunspots disappeared and trade revived, would mean an almost negligible sacrifice of living. Moreover hibernation might be prescribed as a perfect cure for a nervous breakdown or any form of neurasthenia. Social historians might be preserved for a couple of generations in their prime to describe to their descendants at first hand the manners of a bygone period. Politicians out of office might sleep until their party came once more into power. One might live one's life, in short, on the deferred payment system. Unemployment would present no inconveniences. The Ministry of Catacombs would deal with all applications giving due precedence to the most urgent. A ticket would entitle one to a properly cooled cell and insulin treatment with the standard quality of synthesised mass-manufactured insulin and a supply of oxygen at the correct pressure from the central, everworking distributing apparatus connected with every cell. A good rich meal or two before retiring would perhaps become the fashion.

Thus one would at the same time take a ceremonial leave of one's friends and lay up energy for the sleep to come. An efficient de-hibernating department would dovetail its work with that of the Ministry of Labour so that the awakening sleepers might easily find their places in a busy and happy community where the ravelled sleeve of care had been smoothed out by the soft hands of Morpheus.

LOUIS HERRMAN.

Correspondence

LABOUR POLICY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—We may reasonably hope that the somewhat too spiteful attack on Mr. Henderson in to-day's *Times* indicates that the obvious scheme to destroy the Labour Party has failed. No one could study the *Times* for the past month, with its magnificently biased emphasis on economy as the basis of national welfare, without realising the attempt to mesmerise the Labour Party into an onslaught on the standard of life of the lower middle and working classes in the name of national security and so on. Thus were the pockets of the rich to be saved at the expense of the poor—and by the representatives of the poor themselves! Truly an ingenious scheme which would have produced both the economies and, soon, a full-blooded Protection, for as soon as the bankers' and financiers' unpleasant task was completed the Labour Government could have been dismissed—with all the steam taken out of the Party by the attack on the social services. Fortunately, Mr. Henderson and most of his colleagues have refused to obey the crack of the bankers' whip and, in spite of the head-lines, we have in fact no National Government. Now the attack on wages and the social services will not be a walk-over, even though the Prime Minister and his few Labour colleagues may have brought a Tory Government and Protection within easy distance.

I suggest that this is the right moment to look forward and that two tasks for Mr. Henderson and the Labour Party clearly emerge—apart from the immediate fight in front of them. In the first place, they must hammer out their plan for making banking and finance the servant instead of the master of democracy. In the second, they must be prepared with a workable scheme for carrying out all the functions of Government with speed, efficiency and certainty—this being the essential preliminary to the exercise of all forms of social control. These schemes must be no theoretical plans, conceived in some psychological laboratory remote from practice, but must be prepared by those who know all the obstacles and the way to overcome them. The profound weakness of the late Ministry was its complete failure, outside foreign affairs and agriculture, to attempt even the minimum of constructive work or even to show that it had any coherent guiding principle in such tasks as it attempted.

One other point—which I and others believe to be of fundamental importance. Recent events might perhaps have taken a different turn if, at the outset of the clamour for national sacrifice, Ministers and the press had made it clear that the example in sacrifice must be shown by the rich—by those whose doings are so admirably advertised in our illustrated weeklies and dailies. But the attempt to uphold a sober standard of values has been out of fashion for some time. The social indecency of keeping large incomes for individual use and luxury is left as a target for Mr. Tawney almost alone among Labour propagandists. And yet the topic is always to the fore in private conversation. I think this moral issue needs to be faced and Labour propaganda for the crowd should keep always in prominence the notion of individual simplicity of social life. The attack on all forms of individual extravagance might well cover a determination to put an end to the honours system—another important symbol of anti-social thought and practice whose disappearance would do nothing but good.—Yours, etc.,

August 25th. MIDDLE CLASS.

ECONOMY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Engineers are responsible for the slump and Mr. Keynes is perfectly right when he says that economy is no cure for our handiwork. The more difficult it becomes for us to earn a living, the more ingenious must we become with our designs of machines, and in particular of those machines which displace labour.

If you will consider for a moment, not the disease as a whole with its perspiring financial fever, but the humble bacillus causing the disease—the engineer—you will see even more clearly why the advocates of the "spend more money" cure are nearer to its solution than those advocates of the old-fashioned "application of the leeches" of economy.

Let me then show you under the microscope the activities of these slump-causing bacilli—these engineers. Let us take my own case, for then I can give you some data from actual life. For some years past I have been exercising my brains and energies in one particular direction—the manufacture and sale of a device for doing away with part of the hand labour connected with printing. Formerly it was necessary for each sheet of paper to be laid into the printing press by hand. The automatic feeder, which we made, displaced this labour, as our device lifted the sheets one by one off a long pile of paper and fed them into the press. There are about six firms making these feeders and all doing their best to persuade the printer to install them. As well as being a labour saving device this feeder made possible the feeding of printing presses at a far higher speed than was possible before. In some cases the output was at least doubled. As a result of this device and similar engineering and technical progress in the printing trade, the capacity of the trade as a whole is far greater than the demand, and printers are forced to cut prices, to keep their voracious plants fed, to such an extent that there is little or no profit margin left.

Thus you will see that my whole energies were directed to putting men and women out of jobs and causing over-production in the printing trade. But as a bacillus, I am quite powerless to alter my habits, I am only what the "inevitable laws of supply and demand" have made me. I am not by any means the worst of my tribe. A printer recently told me that an American firm had offered him equipment which would enable him to produce in one single day what formerly took him a month. He specialised in cheap coloured picture postcards of the "Sit on my shingle" type. Think of him suddenly increasing his production thirty times: What a menace to our seaside!

It makes us bacilli laugh to hear some of the cures suggested. Better salesmanship—why we have sold so much of our machinery that Indians and Japanese and Chinese are all making their own textiles. We have ruined Lancashire with our excellent salesmanship. "Economy cuts"—thank goodness Professor Keynes sees the joke. How can economy help to keep our mass production plants going. No, Sir! the only cure for mass production is mass consumption, and even then we engineers will beat you economists in the end and force you to an international shortening of the working day as the only effective measure to compensate for our mechanical efficiency.—Yours, etc.,

14, Sidney Street, T. PARNELL MANDEVILLE.
Chelsea, S.W.3.

WAR DEBTS AND THE NATIONAL BUDGET

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As Mr. Keynes has pointed out in his article on the May Report, no allusion has been made to the burden of war debts. One aspect of war debts is worth remembering, which perhaps throws a better light on the general position.

As Mr. Snowden pointed out in his speech of July 24th, 1929, and again at the First Hague Conference, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer came to an arrangement with France and Italy, whereby 42 per cent. and 18 per cent. respectively of their debt to Great Britain were forgiven. This act of quixotic generosity has, however, entailed a *permanent* burden on the nation of £60,000,000 a year to pay the interest on the sum written off. This represents 50 per cent. of the assumed debit Budget balance. Will the Government be strong enough to deal with that aspect of the question?

If any of us as private individuals make a big gift, it entails loss of interest on the capital sum given away, and we bear it cheerfully. The gift to our former Allies was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in our name, and I presume ratified by our representatives in Parliament so that on analogy we ought to be prepared to forgo our interest on the sums given as a gift to our ex-Allies.

The question is an international problem, as in the event of the U.S.A. ever entertaining the idea of cancellation of European debts, the same trouble would arise.

Is there any solution to the matter?

In our case, even supposing reparations and war debts were cancelled, the charge of £60,000,000 would still have to be met.—Yours, etc., M. SIDNEY PARRY.

Rockfort, Cushendun, Co. Antrim.

MINORITIES IN POLAND

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The violation of German Minority Rights by the Polish Government in discriminating against members of the Minority in the application of the Agrarian Reform Law, to which publicity has been given in the British Press, is a particular case of the general policy that the Polish Government is pursuing with the imbecile idea that it is possible to persecute non-Polish races into becoming Polish patriots. Those who were friends of Poland in the days of her oppression view with sorrow, resentment, and indignation the oppressed turned oppressors under the dictatorship of a military tyrant. It is only fair to say that there are large numbers of humane and civilised Poles who are far better than their political creeds and their military chiefs. The present form of Government will not last for ever, and it is to be hoped that it will be replaced by a Government directed by statesmen who will realise that their only chance of welding the diverse racial elements of Poland into a nation is to gain their love and loyalty.

The conduct of the present Polish Government could not well be more misguided and wrong-headed. At the time of the last elections for the Sejm in Upper Silesia both the Polish Opposition and the German Minority voters were treated by the Government Party with a savage barbarity disgraceful in a civilised State; the Ukrainians have been brutally ill-treated by the Polish military and police; the rights of the German Minority have been persistently violated, both wholesale and in detail. Those who follow Polish affairs will remember the famous Ulitz trial which ultimately ended in his acquittal after an attempt had been made to convict him by use of a forged document. Recently ten German-Poles were tried for high treason for making certain statistical investigations in connection with the Deutschtumsbund to enable the German Minority better to be in a position to assert its rights and privileges under the Treaties, and for tendering certain advice to the German settlers, who were evicted from their hearths and homes some nine years ago in circumstances of great cruelty, which helped them in some measure to escape the full rigour of the Eviction Law. The alleged offences took place from eight to ten years ago. The Court of First Instance dismissed the allegations of treason, but condemned the accused to six months imprisonment under a clause of the Polish Code making people punishable for any actions impeding the application of laws. Both sides went to Appeal. The findings of the Court of First Instance were confirmed with slight modifications. The accused, as the judgment admits, are persons of high character. Col. Graebe, the chief accused, is a member of the Polish Sejm, with a record of public service behind him that ought to render him immune from such political persecution as the raking up of these belated and unfounded accusations. The serious implication of the case is that the Polish Government can invoke an article of its Code against the members of any racial minority which appeals to the League of Nations against any law which Poland cares to enact violating their treaty rights. Such action is calculated to impede the operation of the law.

Again, the Polish Government has recently taken arbitrary and unjustified action against the Prince of Pless, because he is leader of the German Minority, to try and corner him financially. Similar action is constantly taken against poor Germans to try and oust them from their livings in favour of Poles.

A whole series of gross and cynical violations of Minority rights will come before the League of Nations this September. Unredressed violations of Minority rights in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, are now so common, despite appeals to that League of Nations which is the professed guardian of those rights, that even the poor and uneducated laugh at the very name of the League. This September will find the League of Nations at the cross-roads in so far as its moral prestige in Eastern Europe is concerned. It has solemnly conferred rights on racial minorities. If those rights have been violated it is the League's duty to see right done, and not to make its primary duty the investigation of ways and means for saving the face of the oppressor.

The whole method for dealing with alleged violations of Minority rights needs radical revision. Clearly the facts should be determined by a judicial tribunal sitting on the spot. Appeals should lie to the Hague Court. If the verdicts of the Hague Court were accepted by the nations involved, well and good. If they refused to accept the verdict of the Court it would report its findings to the League of Nations, which, without further discussion, should use all its weight to insist on the enforcement of the verdict of its own Court. If the nation against whom the verdict was given remained recalcitrant the League should, at least, "post" it publicly as having violated its public undertakings.

The establishment of League tribunals in Minority areas, with equal representation for the Minority and the nation concerned, and an independent President appointed by the League, should not be unwelcome to the nations which have Minorities internationally protected, since they would lead to the local settlement of many disputes which would otherwise be referred to Geneva. A widespread criticism of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, to which petitions are referred in the first place, is that it is acutely conscious of its highly privileged position, and is more concerned with keeping a Holy Alliance with the Powers that be than with bringing home to them their violations of international obligations. This September will show whether or no international treaties conferring rights are scraps of paper. —Yours, etc.,

AN ENGLISH INVESTIGATOR.

EAST END MODES AND MORALS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Most of those who have replied to it evidently missed the point of my article. I merely reported some typical incidents within my experience and gave expression to certain optimistic conclusions I had formed. I neither eulogised the laws of nature nor condemned the Equator. I observed, and noted my observations. I offered no opinion as to the wisdom or folly of the young women whose stories I repeated; and I uttered no plea for "fornication," "promiscuity," or "matriarchy." Courage, frankness, true modesty and tolerance will, I hope, always stir my admiration.

Mr. Ellis's letter deserves a somewhat fuller reply. I appreciate his difficulty in adapting outworn prejudices to new facts and new circumstances; but I cannot share his horror at the "production of lovely babies by nice girls," even if without official licence. Mr. Ellis asks me to guide him as to the "advice on sex matters" which he should pour into "young modern ears." Surely the rector of an East-End parish should need no help from me; for I refuse to take his request ironically. Clearly, I cannot go into lengthy details on these things in the columns of a journal which has each week to cover the fields of politics, finance, music, literature and philosophy in the space of some twenty pages. But I will enumerate what I consider the salient features of a decent and intelligent Christian attitude to the so-called problems of sex—an attitude that, were I a minister of the Church, I should feel obliged to interpret in language understandable of the people.

The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and is the means whereby alone the soul can establish relation with the universe which constitutes man's earthly environment. To regard the body, or any part of it, or any of its natural functionings, as indecent or vile is therefore to fall into the sin of impiety. Men and women are furnished with many mysterious faculties which we must assume are purposive—intended for use. We are guided as to their right exercise by what the psychologists call emotional reactions. These reactions, however, often clash, and so we are further equipped with a balancing faculty called reason or intellect. No emotion is more potent or more "ennobling" (as measured by our religious ideals) than that which marks love between man and woman. The valuable essence of love is non-material, but, in fulfilment of the divine purpose, this is often interfused with an impulse towards a physical expression in itself natural and spiritually illuminating. The beauty of love, however, vanishes if its mere physical expression be consciously sought as a means of sensual gratification, without the spiritual and æsthetic accompaniments that alone give it human value and justification. This is as true within as without marriage. A woman who lovelessly "gives herself" to a man as an act of duty just because she is his wife is as crudely bestial as is the husband who insists on "his rights." Purity in sex relations is a matter of conscience and good taste—spiritual and æsthetic; not of law-courts or of ethical dogmas laid down by regenerate monks or ecclesiastic pundits. The mystery of sex is sacred, and to profane it is as gross an act of sacrilege as would be a drunken orgy at the altar. The ideal may not always be attained. Youthful impetuosity may blind and inexperience may deceive. In such event, honour and self-respect can still be preserved by frank recognition of error and courageous acceptance of consequences. Finally, it is well to keep ever at the front of the mind the sayings reported in the seventh and eleventh verses of the eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel.—Yours, etc.,

63, Harford Street, E.1. HARRY ROBERTS.

EMIGRATION AT THE DEAD END

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As your correspondent G. Backhouse has kindly referred to my little book "Outward-Ho" as a corrective to your sadly pessimistic article, may I be allowed to show how I propose that we should revert to older forms of migration, collective pioneering instead of individual job seeking?

Young men and maidens hitherto regarded by the Dominions as most desirable are no longer wanted, and the existing centres of population must now be left to develop normally.

The Dominion Governments have endeavoured to concentrate the population in the interest of their railway policy; they must now allow a wider development.

My suggestion is the formation here at home of utility companies to launch fully equipped and trained bodies of young men and maidens, married on the strength of inducements offered, upon vacant spots of land in Canada and Australia of which they would in due time become collectively owners on the Garden City principle of Letchworth and Welwyn; bound by agreement for a stated period to live upon the produce of their land, co-operatively, without outside trading or other interference with populated areas, under an experienced and capable manager.

Can we find young couples ready to forgo for a time some of the amenities of civilisation under the inducements offered, and can the Dominions relax their laws now framed for individual land ownership and allow collective ownership?

We shall see. I for one would subscribe my mite.—Yours, etc.,

Hatfield, JAMES LEAKEY.

THE UNEDUCATED CANTAB

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Salzman's article in your issue of August 22nd raises an interesting question which will be discussed so long as anything is discussed, namely, the function of education. Is the aim of education to provide topics for casual conversation by persons whom Mr. Salzman is wont to consider educated or to further knowledge and man's conquest of his environment?

Fortunately it is not necessary to argue this question, as we live in an age of increasing specialisation, and Oxford and Cambridge can continue and develop their historic rôles. Let Oxford brighten our lives by producing even chattier conversationalists, journalists and *littérateurs*, while Cambridge sticks to its last and in the humbler fields of science, economics and poetry semi-educates everyone who matters from Newton to Rutherford, from Marshall to Keynes and Layton, and from Milton to Rupert Brooke.—Yours, etc.,

Wickham Bishops, Essex. GEOFFREY TOULMIN.

GROSE'S DICTIONARY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—For so sympathetic a review as that given by Mr. Richard Sunne to my edition of Grose's *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* one can feel nothing but gratitude. May I, however, point out that we have good reasons for believing that the edition of 1796, appearing five years after Grose's death, was as Grose wished it to be? Hotten erred gravely in his statement that, in editions after the first, words were omitted and explanations softened; there is only one notable instance of the latter, on which I duly comment, and only one notable omission, which I take care to restore. As for my failure to annotate *every* word, I did try to annotate every word that called for annotation, though I could hardly expect to satisfy others at all points: selection implies opinion, and no two opinions agree. I am happy to know that Mr. Sunne's views coincide so materially with mine; more I did not expect.—Yours, etc.,

Paris, ERIC PARTRIDGE.
August 22nd.

Miscellany

OUR LADY OF LEMONS

ALL too soon for the young bride the honeymoon was over, that golden October on the Apennine peak whose roots were in the turquoise bay of Tigullio. They had bidden farewell to the hinterland of the Fontanabuona Valle, waved adieu to its thirty-six campanili below, everyone so anxious none but its own tongue should speak to its own people that one after the other they chimed the hours, as though passing the time along the valley and up to that high-perched Hospice like bucket-bearers at a fire.

There followed two serene days down in a Select Pension on the Mediterranean shore, whence they could hail a Rome-Paris Express that thus bid must deign to pick them up.

The young *padrona* did not speak English. Would the Signora Inglese of her grace help her in a dilemma, for she could neither understand nor please the three English ladies who arrived yesterday? Nothing that she gave them would they eat or drink and she was distracted.

"Are they married or single?" enquired Rose Burke née Terry, to whom such a distinction now seemed vastly to matter.

"One of them, perhaps, has been married, I should think, Signora, but her two sisters, I should think not. *Scusi!*"

While waiting Rose stared at the polished mosaic floor—wheels within wheels—at the hectic Venus on the ceiling—so generously proportioned yet reclining so confidently on the frailest of clouds—at the busts of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso painted in mock bas-relief on the high cornice and all apparently enamoured of that Queen of Love.

When Amelia, looking both bewildered and perturbed, re-entered, she was followed by a tall, gaunt Englishwoman—*not* the one, decided Rose, who had perhaps been married.

"My name is Dowson," that lady introduced herself, "Mrs. Dowson, and the Signorina has informed me that one of my countrywomen would like to meet us, but I must ask you, Miss . . . Oh, Mrs.! *really!* I beg your pardon, Bunk, oh Brook, I am a little deaf, forgive me if I shout, for my sister, my married sister, who has had a lot of trouble, is *very* deaf, that is why we are here."

"For the deafness?"

"No, because of her trouble. We are not frivolous people and so should not be here except for some good reason."

"I hope you are comfortable here. The Signorina wishes me to assure you that she is willing to do everything possible for your comfort."

"Thank you, but she will not instal central heating so we cannot stay. We are forced to take back rooms—which are sunless—because they are cheaper."

"But the sun *floods* in here, as you see, and the stove is lit at night, and the Signorina. . . .

"But there are several young men who have access to this apartment so we prefer the seclusion of our own rooms."

Rose shifted on to safer ground, alluding to the many beauties of the little coast town—so gay and colourful, the mountains silvered or gilt with misty olive or autumnal chestnut, the boats, the sails, the sapphire bay, the sunshine, the moonlight, but Mrs. Dowson was impelled to interrupt: "We have not come here to admire God's works. That would be a foolish waste of time as well as impertinent towards the Deity. We are not concerned with the Riviera as such. In a few days we shall be passing on to a Monastery, where my sister hopes to get some alleviation for her troubled soul."

"In a Monastery! How romantic!" Rose gazed up at that hovering Venus.

"Romantic!" Mrs. Dowson threw a steely glance at

Dante that *en passant* cut out Rose's smile: "And while here we wish to spend our days in prayer and fasting."

"But you must need a decent meal sometimes, and the Signorina wishes me to inquire . . ."

"I have made it plain to the Signorina, who I hope will respect my wishes while we remain, that we shall require nothing but a little unsweetened lemonade brought to our rooms twice a day."

"You mean you would like the sugar served separately?"

"No. There are times, Miss, er Mrs. Brook, when the body needs discipline, but that is a lesson which you, perhaps, have not yet been forced to learn. Now I must ask you to excuse me and to forgive my sisters for not appearing."

"It has been charming to meet you. Forgive me if I have intruded, but the Signorina not understanding English . . ."

"We all three speak perfect French and are accustomed to making ourselves understood. We are most grateful to you for your kind intention. Good morning and thank you."

Mrs. Dowson had scarcely departed when the deferential *padrona* collapsed into an armchair, kicking her heels high as an outlet for suppressed laughter. Truly, as the English lady had asserted, they were accustomed to making themselves understood. The young bride laughed too, though she felt strangely sorry for her compatriots who could not appreciate the Riviera as such. Indeed, her encounter quite saddened her, and she seemed to have mislaid the rose-coloured spectacles through which she had sometimes to view her older, staider husband when at lunch he grudgingly subscribed to her enthusiasm: "Well, I'm not a Mediterranean person."

From the home-bound train Rose Burke née Terry waved a fond hand at the seven mountains upreared against the foam-edged bay. On the midmost peak their Hospice looked like a pink postage stamp stuck upon the scarp. Tears stood in her eyes as she bade adieu to the azure Gulf of Tigullio.

Tears, whether he understood them or not, always annoyed David Burke, such a believer in self-control. These tears, though they did not fall, reminded him of those—so unnecessary and very unflattering—shed by the bride's mother upon their nuptials.

The honeymoon was over—all life lay ahead—the young bride laughed at her own wistfulness as the train drew away from the enchanted bay now bejewelled in the twilight with a necklace of brilliants.

Night fell. Out on the point of San Giorgio a light revolved for the safety of mariners, as though with each flash their own dear English patron saint with his bright sword were cleaving the dark waters. With a warning shriek the train thundered into the tunnel under the mountain towards home—home, a thousand miles away in fog-bound Britain.

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean. . . .

LILY ANNE COPPARD.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS QUACK

JOHN WESLEY, divine, was also a passionate amateur physician, not a practitioner, but a collector and disseminator of "receipts." His book, entitled *Primitive Physic: An Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases*, was first published in 1747, and by 1829 it had run through twenty-nine editions. The title page of the earlier editions shows that it was "printed and sold at the New Chapel, City-Road and at the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Preaching Houses in Town and Country," so that it was issued primarily in the interests of Wesley's followers. I doubt if the book is widely known to-day, but I have found it a pleasant and beguiling little volume. The preface is a splendid piece of pulpit eloquence, very hard on the doctors, and the "receipts" are well worth dipping into. The loyal Wesleyan may draw the line at that, though some of the simpler remedies are engaging enough. And what a range of solicitude! Obesity, baldness, old age, raging madness, the bite of a mad dog, lightning strokes, nose-bleeding, and hundreds of ailments, light and severe, simple and otherwise—eight hundred and more "Receipts." One can fancy Wesley at his desk pushing aside his sermon to rummage in the *Primitive Physic* drawer, or from the pulpit scanning the scalps of the faithful to see how the vertiginous cases were doing. "Apply to the top of the head, shaven, a plaister of flour of brimstone and whites of eggs" was the receipt for these ailing ones. Passing from the tonsures his eye might linger on the bald heads, for he had written: "Rub the part morning and evening with onions till it is red; and rub it afterwards with honey."

The eight hundred remedies are a mixture of empirical, fantastic and commonsense treatment. For a burn, the injured part is to be thrust into cold water. For a man suffocated "blow strongly with bellows down his throat. It is still better if a strong man blows into his mouth." And receipt 184 offers a strange cure for consumption: "Every morning cut up a little turf of fresh earth and lying down breathe into the hole for a quarter of an hour." *Per contra*, Wesley advocated work, exercise and cold water; he was impressed by the uses of electricity; and so alive was he to the gravity of measles that above the three remedies prescribed he wrote the words "immediately consult an honest physician." Seeing that "in complicated cases or where life is in immediate danger," he had recommended application to a physician that fears God, the descent from devoutness to honesty in the case of measles is certainly a tribute to his own honesty and sense of responsibility. Let us finally note that *Primitive Physic* is untainted by the witches' cauldron horrors which made disease doubly hideous. Wesley made no concession to superstition and had no truck with the brood of vipers, toads, bats, spiders and other unclean creatures which infested the sick beds doubtless of some of his own flock. Nor does he so much as hint at the efficacy of faith or prayer as aids to recovery.

As a ferocious hydropath, Malvern and Matlock owe him libations. "For an inveterate cough wash the head in cold water every morning." In a case of raging madness "set the patient with his head under a great waterfall as long as his strength will bear; or pour water on his head out of a tea kettle." For violent nose bleeding the thing is to go into a pond or river. If vertigo attacks you in May, then "on a May morning snuff up daily about sunrise the dew that is on mallow leaves." Methodists with vertigo snuffing dew from mallows on a May morning make a satisfying picture. And so this admirable man proceeds to turn the hose impartially on hypochondria and hysteric diseases, the plague, the bite of a mad dog, leprosy, cholera, the falling sickness and an entire appendix of diseases. But ruthlessly though he soaks and rinses the system, Wesley was no fanatic. The sufferer is invariably given a choice of remedies. If the first fails, he is to try the next, and so on. For instance, if the burn still hurts after an hour's or even four or five hours' immersion—as it probably will—the patient can try elder and fresh butter, or bruised onion, or twenty-five drops of Goullard's extract of lead in half-a-pint of rainwater. He is fortified, too, by the frequent insertion of the word "Tried" in a receipt, and the occasional appearance of a capital I, indicating "infallible." Diagnosis would seem to have been left rather vague, but the patient could always go to a physician who feared God to find out what was the matter with him and then look up the correct remedy in *Primitive Physic*.

As we should expect, Wesley set much store by herbs and flowers, and the New Chapel pharmacopœia gives out a pleasant scent and becomes on occasion really enticing when once we are out of the water. Who would not be dosed on red roses boiled in milk, gathered, by preference, from a neighbour's garden? Betony for toothache, if not infallible, sounds soothing enough for earache, too. "For a venomous sting," apply honeysuckle leaves—to the confounding of vipers and horseflies. I have made a list of the other occupants of the apothecary's garden of Wesley's choice, and here it is, a promiscuous crowd: Turnips, carrots, goosegrass, wild parsnips, succory, almonds, dock leaves, tops of vetches, laurel leaves, wormwood tops, rue, celandine, ground ivy, bramble leaves, daisies, elder flowers, valerian, woodbine, saffron, plantain seed, rhubarb, tansy, spinach, wild parsley seeds, rosemary, lavender, hemlock, marjoram, primroses, fennel, camomile, radishes, burdock, hellebore, watercress, Mother of Thyme tea gathered in June, cinnamons, sage, leeks, marigolds, raspberries, wild ash, black currants, agrimony, gentian root, foxgloves, walnut leaves, dandelions, white hollyhock. What their curative properties, how extracted and administered, would take too long to inquire. To look at them and smell them in the mass may be as efficacious as if we distilled and partook, and anyhow a turn in the garden is good for the vapours.

Why Wesley took on himself the cure of bodies as well as souls is explained in his preface. It dismayed him to find that the traditional remedies devised by the ancients with the help of "a little experience, joined with common-sense and common humanity," were disappearing. He disapproved of the doctors "who were had in admiration as persons who were something more than human." He disapproved of their "compound medicines," and of their "exotics neither the nature nor the names of which their own countrymen understood." And he concluded that "a vast majority of mankind were being utterly cut off from helping either themselves or their neighbours." Evidently it was costly and difficult to be medicined in the eighteenth century. It is curious that he makes no reference to the grosser remedies of popular superstition. He may have thought that they were best attacked by offering the "safe and cheap and easy medicines," the receipts for which he thereupon set to work to collect. It was the act of a humane, courageous man and of a true shepherd of his flock.

VAUGHAN NASH.

THE IRON RAILED-IN GREEN

THE iron railed-in green
is like the single flower that's seen
in a Japanese picture. (Oh, but she
had grace to lend it, who could see
this way!)

I must go in out of the street
which dries my body up, must seek
shelter, and more than that, in some edifice of stone,
built to be like a well wall round the still upflow
of the water
by which the lily of immortality doth grow
through uttered sound and perfect gesture of the soul
and silence more expounding the consecration of the host.

I must go in a space, and pray
that for all things and every day
we live
God bless and forgive.

LYLE DONAGHY.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

An Improper Success

EDGAR WALLACE in his new thriller at Wyndham's is at his most ingenious but hardly at his best. Almost I am tempted to risk becoming an outcast and pariah among my tribe by revealing at the outset who it was who strangled the valet and the doctor and frightened the lady so much that she walked in her sleep murmuring strange words. A mystery on the stage must have an apparently rational solution, and one, moreover, which every member of the audience feels has been hinted at from the first. *The Case of the Frightened Lady* has no such solution, and is not even solved by the detectives. The third act, indeed, is no more than a succession of complete surprises, and Mr. Wallace takes no shame in actually falling back upon secret panels and clutching fingers in the dark, those venerable horror-mechanisms, to give us the sensation of a perfect evening. It is all very improper, but of course there are consolations—the easy dialogue which brings melodrama within a stone's throw of reality, a situation or two of psychological rather than mechanical creepiness, and Mr. Gordon Harker as Det. Sergeant Totty, C.I.D.

Mr. Harker, on the windy side of the law, is not quite so funny as when fighting his normal, dogged, protesting battle against society. He is handicapped, moreover, by a part which gives him very little which is actually funny to do or say. But his admirably complete stage personality—shrewdness and stupidity exquisitely blended—carries him in triumph through the piece and sets one mourning his absence the moment he leaves the stage. Mr. Emlyn Williams as a degenerate young peer, and Miss Cathleen Nesbitt coping most successfully with the astonishing obsessions of Lady Lebanon, share the acting honours.

Clive Brook

The Lawyer's Secret, with Clive Brook, at the Plaza can be more honestly described as a very good show than as a very good film; for it is a very obvious stage play, inadequately transmuted into the medium of the "talkie." So much must be admitted to the detriment of *The Lawyer's Secret*. But there is a lot to be said on the other side. *The Lawyer's Secret* quite obviously was an exciting play and in spite of everything remains an exciting picture. An extremely ingenious and possible situation induces in nearly all the characters of the play a condition of moral distress that is as reputable as it is acute. The play, in fact, consists entirely in a study of conscience and conduct. The problem with which the protagonists are faced is a grave one and they strive to solve it with dignity. All ends more or less, though not completely, happily and the solution remains on the moral rather than the sentimental plane. This is all so unusual in a Hollywood play that it seems worthy of special remark. Though *The Lawyer's Secret* is inadequate as screen drama, it is, within its limitations, excellently photographed, and the continuation is effectively managed. Clive Brook has for once a part suited to his intellectual bearing and distinguished manner. He is excellently supported by a very strong cast.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Saturday, August 29th—
Sir Francis Dyke-Acland on "Allotments and the New Scheme," B.B.C. 7.

Monday, August 31st—
"The Young Idea," by Noel Coward, St. Martin's Theatre.

Tuesday, September 1st—
"The Nelson Touch," by Neil Grant, Embassy Theatre.
International Illumination Congress, London.
Mr. Gerald Barry on "Planning the World," B.B.C. 10.

Wednesday, September 2nd—
Cricket: New Zealand *v.* Gentlemen of England, Eastbourne.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

I HAVE been for a blessed day or two in Thomas Hardy's Wessex. Those of us who know that country at all well, and its people, have always resented the charge of pessimism brought against that great man by townsfolk who know nothing of the grave, humorous, realistic philosophy of those whose lives are spent waiting on the chances of earth and the birth and breeding of beasts. Years ago I lived in Dorset for some years, and I took the opportunity of looking up old friends. It was a short visit, and my friend, who is a farmer, was asking if I could not prolong it and come to see him again. "I'm afraid I can't," said I, "I must catch the 8.50 and get back to work." "What's that? What did you say? Work!" And another who was there intervened on his laughing challenge, "Yes, Mr. Spurle, I don't wonder that you laugh at the idea of anything being work, except your labour"—they were just cutting the corn. "No," said he, dropping his merry-making for the moment, "No. But I wouldn't go to an office, not I. No, I wouldn't be in an office. Come," he said to me, "what could be more butivul than to farm up on the hillside, and to go and sit on Golden Cap, and watch the sun, and look towards the Promised Land." I exclaimed on him for thus taunting a man whose heart is never in London, and he ceased. But here, thought I, is a man whose life has always been hard, one of incessant work, of frequent disappointments and disasters, one whom many town-workers would pity; and here he is rejoicing in his labour, and knowing that its surroundings have a loveliness that surpasses all artificial pleasures and can make up to a man for the heart-breaking difficulties of his task.

* * *

Love of the land has that noble quality more often than is generally recognised. Novelists, sometimes with reason, more often because they misunderstand the peasant's and the farmer's devotion, are apt to make us believe that land-hunger is a form of miserliness. I have known it the most unselfish of all forms of attachment to material things, because it has been the symbol of an attachment to something not material; the passion to be at home with Nature herself, to resolve one's curiously little and insignificant troubles into the calm and certain order of which human life is a part. The man who feels so does not think of Nature, even at her most threatening and least gracious, as his enemy, but as the power which gives him his material; and he believes that in his efforts to make her serve our human needs he is working with Nature and not against her, just as the sculptor releases the true spirit and meaning of the stone which he carves into this shape or that. Even in this summer my farmer friend would not complain against the hardships of the weather; he was going to lose money—where he expected ten bushel or even fifteen he would with difficulty get one, but just as he prefers to lead men rather than drive them, so, I feel, he thinks Nature must not be abused or bullied; that in the long run, if you deal tactfully with the incalculable forces that bring fortune or dismay, you will be satisfied and gain happiness; and that always, in the moments of infrequent rest, there is still the great cliff of Golden Cap, and the sun or the driven cloud upon it, and afar off, across that unharvested sea, the vision of the Promised Land.

* * *

It was in some such spirit, I think, that Mr. Adrian Bell's young hero went to his farm. Hyperbole about modern fiction is so violent that there are few reasonable ways left of insisting that a new novel is a remarkable book. *Silver Ley* (Cobden-Sanderson, 7s. 6d.) has obvious faults as a novel. It is apparently largely autobiographical. Mr. Bell's invention is not quite equal to his recollection, and his book suffers from the arbitrary character of its love-interest. Yet it is a most excellent work; it is easily superior to any novel chosen this year by that strange body, The Book Society, except for Miss Benson's *Tobit Transplanted.* Mr. Bell does not pose his country people. The great flaw in most novels of farm-life is that the novelist arranges his characters too dramatically—Zola, Eden Phillpotts, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Knut Hamsun, T. F. Powys, even at times Thomas Hardy shun the divine dailiness of country life, and support their stories with the needless violence of melodrama. Mr. Bell avoids that danger. His people have the direct, authentic verisimilitude that belongs to those who live the most natural of all productive lives; they are as magnificently ordinary as the people in a story by Mrs. Gaskell, who is perhaps our most excellent portrayer, in the novel, of commonplace people, making them as lovable and as tiresome as they actually are. The story of his book is of the simplest. His young hero goes to farm a small place—Silver Ley. Not long afterwards his family—father, mother and brothers—migrate from London to the same village in Suffolk; and the book is nothing but the story of the slow conviction in the hero's mind that country life, farming life, is the right life. He states his desires simply:

> Because I had come to know what I wanted in life I was not afraid of the prospects of two pounds a week. I could achieve it with that—home and its patient pleasures. As to knowledge and company, I preferred the poetic pedestrianism of a Gilbert White to the society of the intellectuals of the twenties. Chasing through their conversational mazes became more and more of a strain on the rare occasions I rejoined them. I lumbered heavily in the rear of that whim-winged company, and relapsed with lazy relief to harking to the unconscious poetry of rural directions—"You keep right on till you come to them there downfalling housen"—and to sporting with Amaryllis—or Joan—nonsensically in the shade. As for living in narrow compass, there are worlds within worlds, and to know thoroughly the whole of a single acre of my land would have taken several life-times. Besides all this, the post-war world appeared to me ugly and threatening, over-populated already with high ambitions, and would-be wresters of power. I only wanted to live in peace and earn my bread.

Against that background of reality Mr. Bell places his people, and they live the quicklier and the surer for their connection with the land. In its quiet, considered picture of a small farm, in its gentle and discerning portraits of men and women—the Colvilles, Emily Jarvis, the old basket-maker—in its vivid sketches of typical scenes, such as the local fair, the move from London, the sale of Farley Hall, *Silver Ley* has a rare authority. There are plenty of books to-day which induce the reader to murmur: Here I have met a mood, a temperament, an opinion, a conviction, even sometimes a man; but the reader who takes up *Silver Ley* is brought into contact with life.

* * *

I wonder whether the belief shown in *Silver Ley* is shared by many young men and women: if it is, there may yet be an end to national difficulties that will surprise the politicians. You cannot, as Mr. Bell says, use the country as a way of escape from the complexities of modern life; but you may suddenly feel that there, for you, is reality. We shall have to be quick if we are going to take advantage of it. Last Sunday I escorted through the barton of a Dorset farm two or three Londoners to whom the gaiety of a colt expecting food, and the mild impatience of some dozen cows wishing to be milked appeared to be ominous signs of animal unfriendliness. Pan is feared still, but feared through ignorance not reverence; and the Can alone is worshipped as the origin of flesh, fish, milk, fruit and even vegetables other than the potato. It is a poor and dangerous exchange. One wants no false pastoralism in England; but perhaps if politics were dunged about a bit, it might make for sweetness and soundness in that branch of human knowledge, as it certainly does in literature.

RICHARD SUNNE.

BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS

A Study in Æsthetics. By LOUIS ARNAULD REID. Allen and Unwin. 15s.

The Physiology of Beauty. By ARTHUR SEWELL. With an Introduction by LANCELOT HOGBEN. Kegan Paul. 8s. 6d.

Of these two books, kindred in subject, one is readable and the other not, one arresting and the other the reverse, and, while the one provides a strong reason for reading it, the other provides hardly any. Dr. Reid's book is the one that Mr. Sewell's book knocks out of the ring: it is one of those amiable and painstaking, but wordy and undistinguished, treatises on a philosophical subject which, with a large apparatus of knowledge and technical language, with an acquaintance with almost all that has been written on the subject down to the latest times, nevertheless fails to set forth any very definite attitude or to provide that immediate illumination which is the only justification for such a treatise. Dr. Reid is American, and we feel throughout that, although he is an independent lecturer at the University of Liverpool, his proper audience is that of his own countrymen, who rejoice in being told what has been written rather than in being made to think: moreover, Dr. Reid's mind strikes us as anything but tough, indeed, as being a prey of sentimental convictions, a suspicion that is amply confirmed by his final chapter on the objectivity of natural beauty. Mr. Sewell's book, on the contrary, as Professor Hogben rightly says in his introduction, is stimulating and provocative, as an essay should be. It is admittedly incomplete and it challenges criticism on every side: but the way in which it calls in question the traditional assumptions of most philosophy is the most valuable thing about it: it is like an axe laid to the none too solid piles on which the whole heavy structure of a book like Dr. Reid's is erected.

Mr. Sewell has taken over a theory of reality propounded by Professor Hogben, which this is no place to criticise. It must suffice to say here that he replaces the old distinction between mind and matter, good and evil, subjective and objective, etc., by the single distinction between the " public " and the " private." The " public " is the communicable, the " private " the incommunicable. I can know "privately," but I can only prove " publicly " ; the only knowledge I can intelligibly talk about is not my knowledge as I know it, but my knowledge as somebody else knows it. Now, Professor Hogben, on his own showing, was thinking as a biologist when he was led to assert the utility of the conception of a " public world " of science: but Mr. Sewell, though he adopts the biological attitude and is a convinced behaviourist, is concerned with a problem that is not, to most men's thinking, biological. And there is little doubt that, as the result of his inquiry, he contributes very little to the question that he propounds, namely, what is the nature of our reactions to art. At one place he writes:

> The judgment, "this is beautiful," always involves, then, the particular reception of a (compound) stimulus and a particular response to that stimulus. We can only suggest when the judgment will be made if we can establish what sort of human being responds in what particular way to what sort of stimulus. This I take to be the difficult business of the science of æsthetics. If we look into this business I think we shall have to confess that we are not as yet equipped to give a fully public consideration to the problems it presents. There is a vast amount of " private " in the situations that we have to consider: and we do not as yet know how to make this " private " public.

This is the truth, and, with all respect to Mr. Sewell, we are not convinced that æsthetics will ever become an exact observational science.

It is not, however, his conviction that the problems of æsthetics can be solved by experiment, but the nature of its presentation and the suggestiveness of the ideas put forward that make this book so refreshing. We are bound to say that, in our "private" reactions, which of course are not demonstrable on this theory, we were irresistibly led to humour. Mr. Sewell takes as his starting point the experiments of Professor Pavlov on dogs, for his notion is that human reactions to stimuli, of which a beautiful object is one kind, are precisely analogous to the reactions of dogs to the controlled exhibitions of meat powder. Now, by exhibiting meat powder to dogs at various distances and with various sequels, Professor Pavlov discovered how to inhibit, or disinhibit, normal responses. The corollary is that, provided we could find the appropriate technique, similar experiments could be conducted on human beings with beautiful objects, or their components, which would finally expose the whole psychological mechanism of what we call the artistic appreciation.

Well, I am reminded of a not too able candidate's effort to construct a syllogism in Barbara—*i.e.*, all the judgments general and affirmative—which used to be told at Oxford. He wrote down:

All men are dogs:
All dogs are men:
Therefore, all men are dogs.

Mr. Sewell, more ably than that candidate and with complete consciousness of what he is doing, propounds something very like that syllogism. I do not believe that it holds, or that any equation will ever assimilate the complicated processes of human judgment to the discoverable changes of apprehensive process in beasts. Yet I have to admit that this is part of our "private" make-up, and that no demonstration of it can really withstand ruthless criticism such as Mr. Sewell himself applies to Professor Paton's and Mr. Moore's system. This very realisation is a valuable thing, especially when so pleasantly attained: but that is not all. The vistas which Mr. Sewell opens up of æsthetic experiment fill my mind with expectant joy. May I be there when a professor, with grave patience, exhibits æsthetic meat powder at various distances—say, " To be or not to be " at distances of from five to fifty yards and at varying intervals of time—to his kennel of experimentees. What race of dog will he try it on, I wonder? The difficulty being, of course, that all dogs react to meat powder, but that there is no artistic stimulus to which all human beings respond. Somewhere Mr. Sewell dilates on the effect of the sound of C played on a 'cello but issuing from a pigsty. That is nothing. Any wireless expert could produce you the third act of *Siegfried* out of a dungheap. But what then? Would our noses prevent us from recognising a beautiful composition in the most unsavoury spot imaginable, even if we could not there enjoy it?

ORLO WILLIAMS.

NEW NOVELS

Zodiak. By WALTHER EIDLITZ. Translated by ERIC SUTTON. Hamish Hamilton. 7s. 6d.

Saturday Night. By THOMAS MOULT. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

Cat Without Substance. By SYLVA NORMAN. Davies. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Ciggers Goes to Heaven. By DOUGLAS MASSIE. Sampson Low. 7s. 6d.

The World Against Mary. By J. M. FRANK. Translated by OTTO FROMMER. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

The Last Spring. By BEATRICE NAIRN. Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.

Herr Eidlitz's *Zodiak* is a curious, nervous, slightly overstrung novel, part realist, part prophetic, part apocalyptic. Things open simply enough, with scenes of the expulsion of Greek villagers from Anatolia after the Turco-Greek war nine years ago, and it looks as if we were just going to follow the contemporary fortunes of a peasant boy, Gambo, pitchforked into an uncomprehended world. So we are. But gradually the strivings and fortunes of Gambo take on a symbolic quality, and, as the story moves forward, overtaking the present moment and running beyond into an indeterminate future, the symbolism of characters and situations is emphasised, by a shift in perspective rather than by any alteration in tone, and the last scenes take place in a din of aeroplane propellers and an atmosphere of battling intellectual formulæ which would really be rather grotesque if the noise and speed allowed one a moment to think. That din, that atmosphere, are becoming fashionable. Herr Eidlitz exposes his young Greek to the full impact of the contemporary mysticism of duralumin, vacuum tubes, steel pylons, beryllium, the ever-rising speed-pointer, the ever-shrinking earth. Gambo as a lad offers a clean sheet for the contemporary world to write upon. The conflict between old and new is symbolised at first in his talks with the Orthodox village priest who goes into exile with his flock: but the cinema hall at Piræus wins against Mount Athos. Capitalism scrawls some ugly phrases across the page through Mr. Tobias Shell, a manipulating agent of armaments, and romantic love pencils some ineffectual spells in the person of the Greek girl, Nausikaa. After her death (the fantasy is rising in pitch), Gambo attaches himself as a mechanic to the giant Russian aeroplane " Zodiak," setting out on a great anti-God propaganda tour of this wicked world. And therewith the din becomes really deafening. The " Zodiak," built from metal removed from Russian churches, " storms through the night at the speed of 290 kilometres an hour," and the crew, in a fine frenzy of the newest mysticism, keep shovelling out red packages of Anti-God leaflets in appropriate languages over the metropolitan strongholds of Christianity and Capitalism.

> In the stowage reigned an even more hectic activity than when the ship had been over Alexandria or Gibraltar. On the wall beside the emission tubes hung a large outline map of New York. Before it stood the Chief Engineer. "Comrades!" he cried hoarsely, clapping his hand on the map, "there is Wall Street! In a few minutes you will be able to spit on the money bag of the world."

Gambo, however (so far as one can follow his thoughts in this red confusion) feels himself out of place and proceeds to jump into America, long his Promised Land, with the help of a red silk parachute. Not a moment too soon: for the "Zodiak," an instant later, crashes down upon the skyscrapers, and Gambo alone survives to tell its inexplicable tale. "We men will have to evolve quite another kind of consciousness..." he remarks, wisely enough, in hospital, "so as to remain master of the machines that are to come." The remark is itself symbolic of the book—there is anti-climax even in the attempted climax. Nevertheless, *Zodiak* is not a book to pass over.

The air is still noisy and metallic as one opens Mr. Moult's *Saturday Night*:

> Noise, unrest, glamour. Iron. Iron beating on iron. No escape from iron. No escape from noise, unrest, glamour—nor from the dusty heat lurking everywhere and leaping up in stinging, petrol-poisoned waves against the hurried multitudes, surprising them by its venom at such a late hour of the afternoon. . .

And this, one is mildly surprised to observe, is Regent Street. True, there are moods and moments when a London street does seem rather like that; but that passage, and others like it, set a key to which Mr. Moult's story is somehow not well attuned. It presents us, announces the wrapper, with "nearly a hundred vividly contrasted figures"; and it may very well be so. But the pattern of plot produced by the hundred figures is very loosely and untidily tacked on to the background of London scenes and atmosphere which seems to be Mr. Moult's primary interest in *Saturday Night*. Repeatedly in his pages one comes upon a chance remark or a small incident which has the swift authenticity of something overheard or seen in the street or bus or park; and the very fact of their conspicuousness is in a way a measure of Mr. Moult's failure in this novel to blend observation with imagination. A disappointment, if only because the field is such a rich one.

Miss Sylva Norman's *Cat Without Substance*, to make a contrast, reverberates with no clangour of iron or steel. It is a thing of undertones and overtones, oblique glimpses, shifting camera-angles, tricks with words and mental echoes, inner thoughts interlacing with spoken words—a novel as elusive and rarefied as its title, with all the proper contemporary hallmarks of cleverness, intensity, dexterity, and quick sensibility, yet working all too often in a fallacious void, and leaving one in the end with lingering tastes and savours, but no nourishment, no warmth. A middle-class family staked round with culture, and set against it a curious Irish-Italian *ménage*, frail and bitter, in Venice, provide the framework of a novel whose chief interest is in the complex variety of its divagations. Brain and nerves, but too little blood: a long improvisation on an Erard. But Miss Norman is certainly feeling after something deeper than she has here found, something deeper, perhaps, than she can find with such material.

Mr. Massie, in his satiric fantasy, *Mr. Ciggers Goes to Heaven*, feels after something both wider and deeper, but even although he soars (or plunges) into the intangibilities of time and space he manages to keep beneath his feet a fragment of solid, terrestrial, even suburban ground; and the result is most of the time decidedly diverting, and part of the time distinctly pungent. Sunset Avenue, which lies somewhere in N.W.23 or S.W.23 and provides a convenient dormitory and gardening accommodation for the steady City worker, is by now rather a broken-winded hobby-horse for a satirist to be riding; but Mr. Massie uses both intelligence and discretion in handling his theme, and in spite of some *longueurs* and accesses of sentimentality he shows gifts of invention, and a nice knack for forcing things to a logical celestial conclusion.

The World Against Mary, a translation from the German, is another book with its theme in its title. A woman's life of incessant, unavailing struggle ends in a fleeting newspaper item which does not even get beyond the sub-editor of local news paragraphs and drops unused into his wastepaper basket:

> The divorced Mary Szameitat, mother of four children under age, was arrested in the Grunewald in the act of burying her baby, born prematurely owing to an illegal operation. Later she committed suicide at the police station in a fit of insanity.

Herr Frank writes in a tone of impressionistic realism, and presents this life of poverty, deception and unavailing bravery in a way that forces pity, although one's reason sometimes rebels (not merely in defence of the social conscience) against the notion that one creature could be so often and so consistently the victim of rogues, bankruptcy, fraud and chicane.

The Last Spring is a promising, though hardly startling, first novel. Its portrait of the young son of a Swiss country innkeeper, doomed by consumption soon to fill the grave for which he owns the plot in the village cemetery, and living on his love for an English girl under his father's roof, has real feeling. In style, Miss Nairn is rather conventional, but her evocation of a pleasant place and the people living in it is vivid and agreeable.

PROTEUS.

AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY DIARIST

The Diary of John Baker. Edited by PHILIP C. YORKE. Hutchinson. 21s.

"It is only in a Diary never intended to see the light, written solely for the writer's own use, such as John Baker's, and in some parts purposely obscured in order to avoid the prying eye of the curious, that we can hope to find truth, simple and unadorned." So writes John Baker's editor, and leaves us still wondering what was the truth that he sought for and found in this ponderous volume. Was it that Mr. Baker took a vomit of camomile, five tablespoonfuls of castor oil, went out in boots and a great-coat? Or that "Uxor horse-whipped Patty for behaviour about minuit"? Or that the Earl of Cork was "walking about with a fine spotted dog"? Mr. Yorke, maybe, has only claimed the editorial licence of exaggeration, nevertheless his disquisition forms a comical contrast to the diary it introduces. The words "purposely obscured," on the other hand, are something of an understatement, as anyone may see who opens the book at random:

> Uxor and I brouillons con Peggy circa non going to Town.

At times Mr. Baker employs five languages to camouflage a single sentence, adding, it would seem, a few mistakes to give the finishing touches to his purposeful obscurity.

> Girls read . . . Le Cap in "Ceylon" circa marriages, whoredoms, etc., etc. . . . essa leseta dieses? lästein worter sans hésiter —peutêtre de subito ohne refléchir. . . .

is a typical example of the diarist's more intimate style.

John Baker's Diary begins in 1751 at St. Kitts; he was then Solicitor-General of the Leeward Islands. It ends in England in 1778 a few months before the writer's death. The St. Kitts part is in the main a bald account of visits and sudden deaths; with the return of the Baker family to England in 1757, the Diary becomes definitely more entertaining, since the smaller details of English life are always of interest to English readers. And the faithful recording of small details is Mr. Baker's strong point; the wider aspects of life find no place in his note-books. The entry for 24th July, 1759, runs:

> Mr. Selby, Miss Tuite, Miss Selby, Uxor, Patty, Tom and I voir Mr. Walpole's.

Not a word about Mr. Walpole or Strawberry Hill. Of Garrick, Hogarth, Giuseppe Baretti, Grimaldi, Handel and a hundred other interesting people, he records only that he met them. Burke he "observed a good while" in the Lobby of the House of Commons, but keeps the observations to himself. Only on the occasion of his travels abroad does he give vent to a few opinions, roused by the filth of Westphalia and the miserable condition of the peasantry. And here is a rare judgment written in Rouen:

> In general how much handsomer the women are here than at Paris where high and low generally ugly.

The Diary is a key, not to Mr. Baker's impressions and experiences, but to his family life. To indulge in descriptive writing never enters his head, but he can always find time to copy down a prescription or the contents of an account-book. Yet sometimes the bare facts speak for themselves :

> July 5. Après-midi sad work con Uxor in blue camera about what told her hier of myself.
>
> July 8. Another pugn con Uxor about money.
>
> July 10. Après-midi accommodement passait avec Uxor Non, non, non, non.
>
> July 11. Took vomit of camomile.
>
> July 12. Altercation con Uxor.

Altogether a sad week, but Mr. Baker's life is not as a rule so eventful. He plays whist, quadrille, picquet, attends concerts and the play, occasionally drinks too much, visits the spa, and receives an endless train of guests. His reading is pleasantly varied :

> Brought Mem. Vieilleville, Bill's Mortality, 2 Calendars de la Cour and Dr. Hales's book on Ventilators.

He had, as was perhaps natural, a great taste in Trials, a fact which, in later life, seems to have blinded him as to what did or did not constitute suitable reading for young girls.

> 1775. Nov. 28. Girls read noon and night Catherine Nairne's Trial (for incest and murder). Becky vastly improved.
>
> Dec. 5. Girls noon and night read Trial of Lord Grey for seducing Lady Hen.

December 1, 1771, finds Mr. Baker somewhat out of humour :

> Eat at Mr. Bryan's a damned bad beef-steak . . . N.B.—Charles on third new brown horse and I seul in chariot, but what with the beef, the little puppy from Col. Mercer, the stool which could not lie under the seat because chaise box there, was crowded enough.

John Baker, in fact, was a family man, whose interests were in the material world ; an Englishman whose home was his castle and whose eyesight was scarcely good enough to be sure of what happened outside it. But after all, have we not sources enough of private information about Garrick, Walpole, Burke, and Bath in the eighteenth century ? Is it not infinitely more difficult to find out how the great mass of John Bakers lived at any given period of history ? And whoever has courage enough to wade through these undeniably dull pages, through endless commonplace happenings interspersed only once in a way by an entry that has any definite significance, will emerge at last with a very clear impression of the Baker personality ; honest and downright, essentially kindly and generous ; slow-witted and at times unreasonable, yet a sociable person, universally respected and with an essentially English fondness for the good things of life.

THE ICHTHYOLOGIST'S VADE MECUM

A History of Fishes. By J. R. NORMAN. Illustrated by LIEUT.-COL. W. P. C. TENISON. Benn. 28s.

"And God created . . . every living thing that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and God saw that it was good."

The Almighty's approving interest in the result of His fifth day's work has failed to commend fish to some of the wisest of mankind : indeed, it may be said, has failed to popularise them, except as an article of food. Even Plato despised them : "The race of fishes and oysters, and other aquatic animals," he wrote, "received the remote habitations as a punishment for their extreme ignorance ;" and Mr. Lewis Carroll himself has made his fish-footman an unsympathetic character. It was left to the Father of Political Economy to originate the study of the Economy of Nature, and to be not only the first zoologist, but also the first ichthyologist. So accurate was Aristotle's information, and so vast his array of facts, that he remained unrivalled and unsurpassed until some eighteen centuries after his death, when the publication, in the 16th century, of the works of Belon, Rondelet and Salviani gave a fresh impetus to the study of fish.

The scope of ichthyology, as Mr. Norman demonstrates throughout his absorbing book, is enormous ; even in this most comprehensive work he does not exhaust, indeed only introduces, the subject ; he deals with every aspect of fish life, laying especial stress on evolution and on the importance of environment in moulding the bodies of the fishes, and devotes whole chapters to form, locomotion and respiration, and others to fins, scales, mouths, breeding habits and parental care, and he shows us how, in studying fish, we must draw upon the researches of the anatomist, embryologist, physiologist and geologist, no less than on those of the statistician, chemist, physicist, meteorologist and mathematician. Mr. Norman defines fish as "vertebrates adapted for a purely aquatic life, which propel and balance themselves by means of fins, and obtain oxygen from the water for breathing purposes by means of gills." This admirably clear definition decides, once and for all, what is a fish and what a whale or lobster.

The ways in which fish are adapted for a purely aquatic life are numberless. Every species has its own peculiar variation of mouth or teeth, fin or gill, tail or skin. These are always either for offence or defence, for procuring food, air, or greater speed, or for breeding purposes. Thus the fast fishes are streamlined to give greater swiftness. "Who," as Professor Goode asks, "can calculate the speed of the Bonito ?" whilst the sluggards who live near the ocean floor are heavily armoured, as saw and sword, porcupine and trigger, bat and snipe fishes; those that live on the sea floor itself, as flounders or plaice, are disguised by spots and bars to resemble their surroundings. In the velifer the fins become sails, in the flying gurnards, wings ; the sea-horse has a prehensile tail, the elephant mormyrid a trunk ; angler fish carry rod and line, archer fish squirt water at their victims ; the melancholy John Dory has a protractile mouth ; and there are parrot-faced fish that, according to Aristotle, "chew the cud," and rabbit-faced fish, and fish with tobacco-pipe and spoonbill faces. Indeed, Lieut.-Col. Tenison's illustrations show a variety almost too strange and terrifying to be true.

Fish are varied feeders : the barracuda prefers "black men, dogs and horses rather than white men," on Sir Hans Sloane's authority ; the blue fish, Roman-wise, disgorges the contents of its stomach when full, and begins again ; the caribe of South America neatly picks the flesh of a man, though leaving his clothes intact, whilst the wels swallows children whole, and a learned cod, in 1626, swallowed a work in 3 treatises. To escape pursuit, the tarpon may leap eight or ten feet, but surer defences are employed by the weavers, who may kill even men with the poison they eject ; and by the electric fishes, whose shock is usually "of sufficient strength to knock down a fully-grown man."

Other strange fish are luminous ; one, a rare berrycoid from the Indian Ocean, has a large phosphorescent organ below the eye, placed on a movable flap, so that when light is not wanted it can be turned inwards and received into a cavity underneath the eye.

"Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear."

Yet Gray himself could hardly have imagined the lovely profusion of colour of some of the coral-reef fishes. The sea-perch has a ground colour of brilliant carmine, becoming yellow on the

Wherever you go
YOU
CAN BE
SURE OF
SHELL

lower parts, with brilliant ultramarine spots on the sides; the thread fin is chrome yellow, with darker markings, orange fins and vermilion red filamentous rays; whilst the male trunk fish is grass-green on the sides and back, lemon yellow on the belly, variegated by a network of pale blue lines; its back is traversed by irregular bands of ultramarine, whose edges are picked out in chocolate brown. Less radiant, but no less interesting, are the colour changes of a Mediterranean flat fish, both in natural and artificial surroundings, of which there are two excellent plates; and once a butterfly fish was caught that had markings resembling the Arab creed; it was sold in Zanzibar market for 5,000 rupees!

Mr. Norman explains and destroys many legends. Climbing perch do not climb; downpours of fishes are explained by a sucking wind; fish cannot weep, yet can sleep without eyelids, and the sea-serpent is probably only a fifty-feet long scarlet-gilled oar-fish, or a giant cuttlefish. Though against him we would pit Commander Gould. Fish are not silent, indeed they can be heard from a steamer's deck, and it was not the sirens that lured Odysseus, but the grunts of the Sciaenids. Truth, however, is, in this case, ample compensation for the loss of fiction: even if Mr. Norman abandons the sea-serpent he gives us a sea-dragon, and a file fish which stands on its nose imitating eel grass, and a Mediterranean stargazer which buries itself until its wide mouth looks like a cleft in the sand. From this it dribbles a little red filament which crawls, wriggles, contracts and expands, imitating to perfection the movements of a small worm. We are told of scabbard fishes that swim ashore on cold nights in their thousands, apparently in a state of temporary insanity; of fierasters that use sea cucumbers as muffs; of the breeding of pipe-fish, the spawning of salmon, the migrations of eels, of the Siamese fighting fish and the nest-making Bitterling.

Men are but upstarts compared with fish, the oldest peerage is parvenu when compared with the Elfin Shark, which is a direct descendant of fossils found in cretaceous rock, or with Lung fish which are most closely related to palæozoic forms. Fish were dominant for thirty-two times the length of history, before even the most rudimentary man evolved; and at the time when the fish-like fossils first made their appearance, Marsipobranchs, Selachians and Bony Fishes were already diverse and specialised types.

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Mr. Norman writes with admirable simplicity and directness, and avoids the use of technicalities as far as possible; he includes scientific terms only where the omission would be at the expense of clarity. This book is indeed "of sufficient interest to provide general reading," and it is difficult to imagine that anyone who takes it up to glance through it, however cursorily, will be satisfied short of a thorough reading of its varied and fascinating pages.

SYNGE AND IRELAND

Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature. By DANIEL CORKERY. Longmans Green. 7s. 6d.

In the pages of Mr. George Moore's *Hail and Farewell*, the English reader may learn much about the political and religious odds against which the new poetry and drama of Ireland had to struggle for independence. The *Playboy* controversy has been forgotten by the world and Synge's plays have long ago won the affection of Irish audiences. But the freedom of the artistic conscience is still ungranted, and every succeeding writer of originality must fight his own cause. Mr. Corkery's book is the first essay in literary criticism which has come from Ireland in recent years, and it is disturbing to find that this distinguished writer believes in more than argument. Writing of Sean O'Casey's plays, he says: "To remain silent in the midst of that noisy gaiety, even to fling brickbats about, protesting against it, is, one thinks, to avoid the deeper vulgarity." Mr. Corkery, who has just been appointed to the Chair of English Literature at University College, Cork, has undertaken to explain the grievance of the brickbatters. His own novels and stories have distinction: they accept and present Irish life in subdued and quiet tones. His orthodoxy is unquestionable, despite the fact that his recent study in later Gaelic literature, *The Hidden Ireland*, unconsciously upset a pious legend and caused a flutter in ecclesiastical circles. But if Mr. Corkery is a novelist of melancholy charm, as a controversialist he is vehement and unsparing. His book shows the difficulties against which younger Irish writers of liberal mind must contend.

Briefly, Mr. Corkery regards the entire Anglo-Irish school as an abnormal phenomenon. It was the attempt of a small Ascendancy class, Protestant in outlook and education, to express the life and emotions of the Irish Catholic majority for the benefit of a foreign public. The comicalities of Lover and Lever yielded to the depredations of poets who seized on the "wraith-like wisps of vanished beliefs that still float in the minds of a tiny percentage of the people." Synge, of course, reacted against the Celtic Twilight: he bid adieu to "the skinny Sidhe": but he tumbled too deeply into Red Dan's ditch. Synge came nearer than his contemporaries to the mind of the folk, for he lived in remote glens and on islands, but his temperament was peculiar. Moreover, in common with all Ascendancy writers, he had "an inherent lack of spiritual delicacy."

There is a clear case against Synge, for those who dislike naturalism, and no amount of tubbing will wash out the pagan dye of his genius. It is this feeling of paganism which Mr. Corkery dislikes so intensely. His study of the plays is careful and conscientious, though a trifle academic. He employs an elaborate critical apparatus that is unnecessary, for the limitations of Synge's method and overwrought style are immediately recognisable. He finds fault with Synge's free use of holy names and his cordial dislike of priests. But he admits that Synge, in his one early tragic play, *Riders to the Sea*, showed sympathy with and knowledge of the spiritual consciousness of the Irish peasantry as distinct from religious institutionalism. If Mr. Corkery demands more from the plays than Synge could give, we may, nevertheless, agree with his final summary:

> The creations of Synge's genius have now passed by, as in a frieze. They were all peasants, even if a few of them carried crowns upon their heads. When they laughed, the laugh was loud and coarse, as befitted their background, a country public-house or a tinker's ditch; when they sorrowed, the sorrow was unrestrained and wild: the glens were there to receive it. . . . Such of them as were beautiful were reckless; and those that were grotesque were not conscious of it. They never took thought of that beauty which "lies in no secret of proportion." The rapture of self-sacrifice, the quality of mercy, the joy of reconciliation, the relief of forgiveness, they knew nothing of: strangely enough, for all of us, however cir-

cumscribed our days may have been, have experienced such revelation. None of these revelations, however, recurred to our memories, while our ears were stretched and our eyes opened to what was afoot among those excited and excitable men and women.

But Mr. Corkery's tardy acceptance of Synge's plays as a self-contained world of imaginative art is, in itself, a condemnation, for he regards art as a complete collaboration between a writer and his people. Catholic Ireland has already given us Mr. George Moore and Mr. James Joyce: the young native writers are equally in revolt; but Mr. Corkery banishes them all beyond the fold. The Irish sex novel, in particular, must be kept within rigid bounds and its writers must "transcend the lusts and shivering of the mortal flesh." The fact that a drastic Censorship of literature prevails in the Irish Free State, that educated Irishmen are searched at the ports of entry for books that "incite passion," suggests that the abnormal and humiliating conditions which Mr. Corkery confines to the Anglo-Irish class may be of wider extent.

AUSTIN CLARKE.

A NEW TARIFF GOSPEL

The Key to Prosperity. By NOEL M. P. REILLY. Allen and Unwin. 4s. 6d.

There is nothing so necessary for the world to realise at present as the sheer absurdity of the situation in which it finds itself. A surfeit of goods, and abundant power to produce more going to waste on the one hand; and, on the other, stark poverty over a great part of the earth's surface, and urgent demands for "economy," and above all for wage-reductions, even in the more prosperous areas. Under-consumption as the disease, and yet less consumption as the remedy. Truly, we live on the wrong side of Alice's looking-glass; and, if we can but be sure who is responsible for our trouble, it is high time to cry "Off with his head!"

It is important to realise this absurdity, because, until we do really see how ridiculous it all is, we are not likely to hit on an acceptable remedy. Accordingly, Mr. Reilly's book, which drives home once more the lesson of our collective folly, is very welcome. He writes pleasantly and clearly, and with plenty of common sense; and, even if it has all been said before, it needs saying many times still, before people will let it sink into their minds.

The difficulties begin when Mr. Reilly comes to his proposed remedy, which is a more optimistic and extreme variant of Mr. Keynes's proposal for a revenue tariff, balanced by a subsidy to the exporter. Mr. Keynes suggested a low tariff at a flat rate, and the use of the proceeds to provide a fund for an export subsidy also at a flat rate. Mr. Reilly wants a tariff levied at a varying rate on goods consigned from different countries, according to the relation which their wage-level bears to that of Great Britain, and also a retaliatory duty against countries which put high tariffs on British exports. Similarly, he wants his subsidy to exports to be so graded as to counteract the differences between British and foreign wages in the particular trades concerned. By this means, he claims, full employment could be secured for British capital resources and British labour; and he optimistically holds that this could be done without any—or with very little—tendency for prices to rise in the home market, because of the economies which a protected home market would enable the British manufacturer to make in his overhead costs. He wants legislation to raise wages; for it is an essential—and a sound—part of his case that consumption and production can be made to balance at a high enough level to cure unemployment only if wages are raised so as to correspond to the increasing productive power of the community. But he does not believe price-control to be necessary, and he thinks all he wants can be accomplished under the capitalist system, if only his simple remedy of tariff *plus* subsidy is applied.

In short, Mr. Reilly begins well, with an admirable exposure of what is wrong. But he then convicts himself of crankiness by suggesting that all the difficulties can be cured by one simple remedy, without any alteration in the fundamentals of the economic order. He further holds that, by means of his proposed device, one country, however dependent it may be on foreign trade, can insulate itself from the rest of the world, and secure full prosperity at home, even if the rest of the world remains prostrate. He brushes aside the question of the retaliation which other countries might be expected to make. He does not even mention the "most favoured nation clause," or the tearing up of all commercial treaties which his policy would involve. In short, his solution is as naive as his exposition of the humour of our plight is devastating. Yet, if Mr. Reilly's remedy is as absurd as the situation it is designed to meet, it cannot be denied that his attack on the free trade philosophy is formidable. For the Free Traders have generally ignored unemployment; and unemployment is a question which nowadays cannot be ignored. It is at the very centre of the economic problem.

SHORTER NOTICES

Folk-Tales of Iraq. By E. S. STEVENS. Oxford University Press. 15s.

In her introduction to this collection of Mesopotamian folk and fairy tales, Miss Stevens tells us that the art of story-telling is declining in Iraq. The cinema and the gramophone have supplanted it in the towns, and the coming of wireless is likely to give it its death blow. Hence this collection has been made none too soon. These tales have been taken down in the vernacular from the repertory of the present day. Many will be new to the student, but through many of them there runs a familiar thread of ideas, in some old friends turn up in new guise, and in one or two the story as we know it from other sources is but slightly changed. Twice the Forty Thieves make their appearance. Aladdin is there in all but name. The youngest son performs miracles; Cinderella sheds her slipper in the desert, and wins her prince; the nursery rhyme of the old woman whose pig would not go to market comes to us in another cumulative form; and page after page recalls dim memories of other and half-forgotten tales. But there are stories which stand alone, legendary tales that seem to have a base in fact.

Memories of a Long Life. By the late LORD RATHCREEDAN. Lane. 10s. 6d.

Captain Cecil Norton was for many years a popular Liberal Member of Parliament for a South London division, and a Whip in days when it was still easy to marshal the party host for a division. As Lord Rathcreedan, and a survivor of the Ireland that had vanished, he wrote these memories, as artless a chronicle as even a very old Irishman could produce. Cecil Norton spent his boyhood in Wicklow, was sent to France in his 'teens, and had many joyous years as an officer of Hussars. He found the House of Commons at the end of the century hardly less enjoyable than the Army, although it provided him with only a meagre crop of stories for his book. They are frequent and

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quite amusing in the earlier chapters. It is odd to find Lord Rathcreedan saying that Dilke's career was broken by circumstances over which he had no control. He retells the story of Joseph Chamberlain's advising a prominent Liberal to burn all the party's Leaflets, for he was going to start them on a fresh trail. Lord Rathcreedan says he could not remember to whom this was said. An inquiry in the Lobby would have yielded the information that it was Viscount—then Herbert—Gladstone.

Methods of Choosing a Career. By F. M. EARLE. Harrap. 12s. 6d.

This detailed description of an experiment in helping children to choose their work is a useful contribution to the study of applied psychology. The individual child's fitness for this or that kind of occupation is judged on his physical condition, his home surroundings, his response to intelligence tests, his school report, his observed temperament, his hobbies and noticeable aptitudes, his own wishes, his family's need, and so on, and it may be said that the Institute's method seems as sound as our present knowledge can make it. When advice and wishes coincided, the results, as would be expected, were better still. But the following up of careers is a difficult business, and in any event is probably impossible over a period that would give decisive results. This, of course, Mr. Earle and his coadjutors recognise. Incidentally the book gives us an interesting study of the attitude of employers, parents, etc., to the assistance proffered by the experimenters. It is a little difficult to understand to whom the book is addressed. It seems to be written by an experimental psychologist for the use of his fellows or for advanced students. If it was intended to appeal to laymen practically interested in results rather than in method its technicalities should have been simplified.

Henry Kingsley. By S. M. Ellis. Grant Richards. 12s. 6d.

In spite of some notable opinions to the contrary, we do not think Henry Kingsley's reputation is likely to overshadow his brother's. He was a good descriptive writer, but no better than Charles; he was a fair novelist of English life, but not so good as Charles Reade; he could introduce Australian scenes which gave and still give a freshness to his stories—but he is long-winded, prosy and inclined to preach. Mr. Ellis's volume is a painstaking, very uninspired piece of book-making; he quite unnecessarily looks for explanations of Henry Kingsley's neglect by biographers and critics other than the quite simple one that he was obscured by greater men.

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GRAMOPHONE NOTES

WHILE the present silly-season of gramophone records continues I feel no apology is necessary in drawing attention to certain foreign recordings which, though not novelties, may be unfamiliar to many gramophone enthusiasts.

French gramophone companies (by which I mean not only the purely French firms, but the French branches of H.M.V. and Columbia) do not, to my mind, produce records that are technically as good as English ones, but they show far more enterprise in their choice of music to be recorded.

Modern French music is generously and intelligently represented in their catalogues ("Merely French chauvinism," you may say, but, speaking as a composer, I would not really object to a similar chauvinism on the part of English companies). Thus, Debussy is represented not only by such deservedly hackneyed pieces as *Fêtes* and *L'après-midi d'un Faune*, but also by those lesser-known works of his later period which are still neglected or misunderstood in this country. The conception of Debussy's later works, as pale and mannered reflections of his early successes, is one of those artistic legends that are accepted by the average listener because critics and performers are either too lazy or too ignorant to explode them. With a few natural exceptions, Debussy's last works are remarkably free from the rather stagnant mannerisms of his earlier compositions, notably *Pelléas and Melisande*, which, in spite (or as some might think, because) of its wonderfully sympathetic treatment of the text, is far from being Debussy's finest music.

We have only to compare the best of the late piano *études* with the earlier and more familiar piano *images* to see the increasing power and freedom of his work. Someone, I believe it was Aldous Huxley, once said that Conrad's characters were mysterious, because their author knew so little about them, and it might similarly be argued that Debussy's impressionist pieces were brief and elusive because their conception had to some extent eluded the composer. This might be true of some of Debussy's more pictorial pieces, but hardly of those later works where he at last seems to reveal himself; works which have the brevity of a diary or a conversation between friends where an unfinished sentence is a sign of intimacy, not shyness.

In his last years Debussy was a dying man; but it would be a mistake to stress too much the effects of the ghastly illness that gradually killed him, for after the strange melancholy of the orchestral *images*, the sonatas and the pieces for two pianos have a surprising spiritual gaiety. All three sonatas have been recorded, and to those who may be unfamiliar with Debussy's last period I particularly recommend the exquisite sonata for flute, viola and harp (Odéon 3 10in., played by Mm. Moisé and Ginot and Mlle. Laskine). This work may at a first hearing seem sketchy, but it is far from being "impressionistic"; the line of Debussy's later work is not fragmentary, it is a controlled arabesque with the unexpected logic of those Chinese landscapes that gradually unroll without ever being confined within the conventional limits of a frame. Debussy's last works are no more like his earlier "impressionist" pieces than a Chinese landscape resembles a cathedral painted by Claude Monet.

Both the other sonatas have been well recorded, the sonata for 'cello and piano by French Columbia (2 12in. records LFX 85-6, admirably played by Mm. Marechal and Casadeus) and the sonata for violin and piano by H.M.V. (2 12in. D.B. 1322-3, played by Thibaud and Cortot). With the possible exception of some of the *études*, the best of Debussy's later piano music is found in the three pieces for two pianos *en blanc et noir* (French H.M.V., 2 12in. W. 1065-6, played by Mlles. Ruff and Jeanès). The first of these has an extraordinary vigour and gaiety, while the second enjoys the melancholy distinction of being the only fine piece of music inspired by the Great War.

I am pleasantly surprised by the number of Debussy songs that have been recorded in France. He was one of the few composers who could completely adapt himself to widely differing poets while retaining his own individuality (compare his equally sympathetic but equally characteristic settings of Baudelaire and Villon). But why, I wonder, do the English companies issue no good modern songs? Few people, I suppose, would dispute Peter Warlock's distinguished position as a song-writer, yet as far as I know not one of his songs has been recorded.

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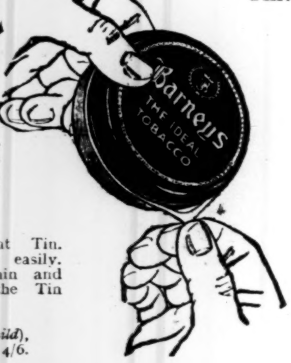

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About Motoring

THE INTERNATIONAL MOTOR CYCLE TROPHY

If we exclude boys of school age there are probably more active motor cyclists in Great Britain than active cricketers. But there is a vast difference in the nation's interest in the two sports. When England plays New Zealand at cricket, although the New Zealand eleven is hardly stronger than a powerful county team, the nation is thrilled, and even when a wet day prevents a single ball from being bowled, the daily newspapers devote a column to our disappointment. When England tackles Europe in a motor cycling test match the struggle is completely ignored by the majority of English newspapers; where some mention is accorded the report is usually limited to a few lines tucked away in some obscure corner. It is not possible to justify this contrast on grounds of reason or logic. Both sports demand real genius from their champions. Both sports afford a searching test of skill and character. Of the two, motor cycling is possibly the more important. It is an even more educational pastime than cricket, and it involves a great national industry—possibly the only industry in which Britain still retains a genuine pre-eminence. It is less purely sporting than cricket, because its industrial aspects infect its sporting events with a definite element of commercialism. This is a main reason why the public school type of sportsman despises it. On social grounds public prejudice against motor cycles is deeply rooted, and prevents their triumphs being good "news." Our conservatism compels us to keep cricket on a pedestal, though many boys really hate the game, and abandon it for tennis and golf as soon as they escape from compulsory games. Finally, most of us on occasions watch cricket matches, and are therefore able to appreciate the report of a test match. Barely one Briton in a thousand has ever seen one of the principal motor cycling events; and so we lack the background of reminiscence which interprets newspaper reports. The nation will never take such interest in international motor cycle events as it feels for a cricket test.

Next week will see three selected British riders battling for the International Trophy against Germany, Italy and France, over a course of 1,200 miles in the Dolomites and Julian Alps, culminating in a high-speed test over the famous Monza track—the Italian Brooklands, near Milan. The route includes all the fiercest Alpine passes in northern Italy, and an average speed of 30 m.p.h. is scheduled for the road trial. The winner is, broadly speaking, the team which loses fewest marks for trustworthiness; a single puncture, suffered by one rider, will probably destroy the team's chance, unless that rider effects a lightning repair and by lurid driving contrives to reach the next control station on time. This Trophy is annually contested on the soil of the nation which won it in the previous year. England has won it so often that she became rather over-generous, and allowed defeated countries to run it on their soil instead of on ours. The chances of a mistake are much greater on foreign soil. The visiting driver is unfamiliar with the roads; is unable to ask his way when he is in doubt about the route; and is at the mercy of local officials, whose instructions he cannot understand. It is possible that we shall recover the Trophy next week, but it is barely probable. The British riders excel in two special departments. They can negotiate unridable surfaces faster and more safely than any rivals; and they can maintain higher speeds than anybody else in racing. In this test match the worst surfaces will be comparatively mild, and will present no problem to their European rivals; and in the track test there is nothing to be gained by extreme speed—it is simply designed to bring out any latent defects due to the previous 1,200 miles of strenuous road work. The odds are that some slight misunderstanding or difficulty with the language will cause a British rider to drop a precious mark or two. The British team consists of H. S. Perrey (500 c.c. Ariel and sidecar); A. E. Perrigo (500 c.c. B.S.A. bicycle); and G. E. Rowley (500 c.c. A.J.S. bicycle). If they secure the Trophy they will have triumphed over incredible difficulties.

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International Vase. In this event nations are represented by their nationals, who may ride any machine they fancy. Eight teams are entered. The Belgian, German and Italian teams drive machines of their own nationalities. There are two Dutch teams in the Vase, and five of their six mounts are of British manufacture. There is a team representing Czecho-Slovakia, and two of its three machines are British. Outside these teams some 44 riders are competing for medals, and four of these are women—all of them English girls.

It is usually the unexpected which hampers us in these events. One year the British Trophy team headed the list on the fourth day, having lost no marks. Travelling through Austria they were sent up an easy pass with no particular gradients. The narrow, unfenced track hugged a precipice, and consisted of a string of blind corners round jutting rocks. The road was so narrow that it is organised for ordinary Austrian traffic as a one-way route, i.e., from 9 a.m. till noon it is open to eastbound traffic; from noon till 3 p.m. to westbound traffic, and so on. The British sidecar entry got half-way across the pass, when he was trapped behind a slow local van, which there was not room to pass. He lost many minutes sitting on its tail. When he contrived to slip past it he presently encountered a stranded motor coach which had broken down whilst crossing the pass in the reverse direction. None of the rival sidecars encountered either delay, as they started hours before or after him. At the next control he had to register a protest, and he did not know any language which the officials spoke. Simultaneously a British Trophy rider on a solo machine punctured at the beginning of this dangerous section. He mended his tyre, and began racing to regain his lost time. Not knowing for how many miles the blind, twisty pass lasted, he took indescribable risks, and finally emerged safe and sound on to an easy main road with some ten minutes to spare. These are typical of the mishaps which hamper men riding in a foreign land; and it will be something of a miracle if our team bring the Trophy home with them. Cynics may be amused to hear that in such disputed matters the voting on the international committee is apt to follow national blocks, and to create reminiscences of 1914–1918.

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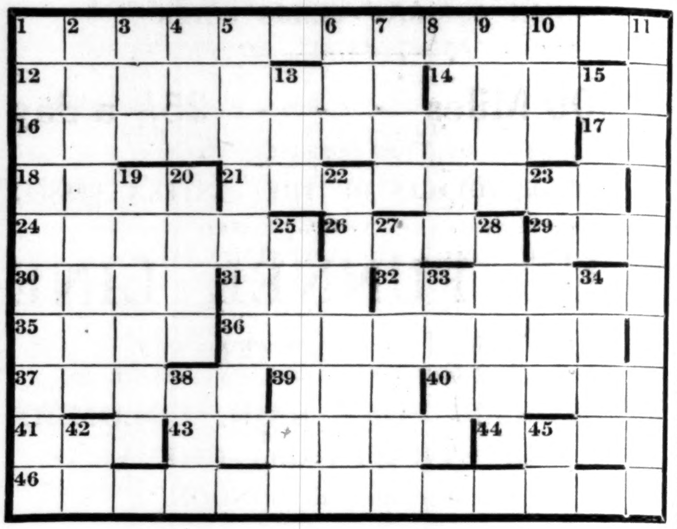

HOT STUFF.

ACROSS.

1. Suggestive of my title.
12. Merely disgust.
14. What is often part of a chain, reversed.
16. Of the gloaming.
17. Habitat of an old lady very much in the public eye.
18. Image, perused by me.
21. Hat invented by the late Mr. Lear.
24. An opinion that seems to deny Mr. Swinley.
26. Where Mr. Mason put his prisoner.
29. Make impact without the Dean.
30. Foolish.
31 *rev.* Strength, especially in 13 *rev.*
32. Some thus describe the earth.
35. Act with which J.P.'s are supposed to be familiar.
36. *Sous les toits de Paris.*
37. You have more than just the moke.
39. I have been cut out of the will.
40. Follow—with a black eye to finish with.
41. I suppose the Pope's is heavily insured.
43. He has chosen a fitting career.
44. One of the rug-headed tribe.
46. Interested in the Day of Judgment.

DOWN.

1. What Satan is presumed to do.
2. Physical state that can be got from Proust.
3. What Mr. Nares gave to Mr. Lindrum.
4. Venomous—and shakes.
5. These tumours get on my nerves.
6. Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.
7. Mr. Lindrum hangs his wherewithal upside-down.
8. She said: it is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the propositions of a lover.
9. Edun.
10. This man's blood is highly prized.
11. Outlet.
13. See 31.
15. Empty.
19. What the title of Trinculo's crossword sometimes is.
20. Castor suspended by the heels.
22. Darling of the fans.
23. Mr. Jones wrote a play about us.
25. I'm not very successful at solving these crosswords.
27. Proceed backwards and ungainlily.
28. Take back your toll.
33. Here you can deposit your corpse.
34 *rev.* What I did not get with my stainless cutlery.
38, 42. Characteristic spirit.
45. This is upside-down.

BRIDGE

HOW TO BID AT CONTRACT: A SERIES OF ILLUSTRATIVE HANDS

Hand No. XXI. Defensive Overbid of Three in a Suit.

North:		*East:*	
♠ K 7 4 3	♥ K Q 8 2	♠ 6	♥ A J 10 4
♦ 10 9 5	♣ J 6	♦ A K J 8 3	♣ 9 5 3
West:		*South:*	
♠ J 9 8	♥ 5	♠ A Q 10 5 2	♥ 9 7 6 3
♦ Q 7 4 2	♣ K Q 10 7 2	♦ 6	♣ A 8 4

Score: Love-all. South deals.

The Bidding:

South - 1 ♠ West - No bid North - 2 ♠ East - 3 ♦
South No bid West - 5 ♦ All pass.

Notes on the Bidding. To make an overbid of *three* (not vulnerable), one should hold about six playing tricks, about four of them in the trump suit. East's hand is just strong enough to bid. South does not continue his spades, as he has already shown his full strength. West's cards amply justify the double raise in diamonds.

In play, East just makes his 11 tricks.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD. (Notes and explanations in brackets).

ACROSS.—1. premeditation. 11. aimless. 14. laugh *rev.* 16. Romulus. 17. raemlv (marvel). 18. reams. 21. Beatrice. 23. innocence. 25. anel (lane, Lena *rev.*). 26. cruder. 27. negligé. 29. II. 30. Ernie. 32. Kismet ("kiss me, Hardy"). 34. D.C.L. 35. attendant. 38. ehos (hose, shoe). 40. so(i)rée. 41. dyne. 42. Septuagesima.

DOWN.—1. parricides. 2. Rio. 3. Emma-nuel. 4. Ulm *rev.* 5. eels. 6. Thrace (anag.). 7. Agate. 8. Tue(sday). 9. ollcege (anag.). 10. novelettes. 12. rebus *rev.* 13. greenness *rev.* 15. minima *rev.* 19. enrich. 20. Tsardom *rev.* 22. (mine)ral. 24. cents (the almighty dollar). 28. g(u)ides. 31. itoa (iota). 32. knee. 33. sadi(st). 36. Nym. 37. ant *rev.* 39. op(era).

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THE MANAGER, THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION
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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR.

THE CITY AND THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT—POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON THE SECURITY MARKETS—THE CHILEAN DEFAULT—CINEMA SHARES.

NO crisis within my recollection has fallen so flat in the City as the financial or foreign exchange crisis of August, 1931. Jobbers hailed the advent of a National Government by marking up prices in the gilt-edged and industrial share markets, but there were no excited crowds of brokers clamouring to do business, and the tendency was for prices to react in the absence of public interest. Of course, half the City is on holiday and the half that remains at work is acutely conscious that the exchange crisis is not settled until further credits have been granted to the Bank of England or the capitalist classes, both British and foreign, have definitely decided that sterling is a safe currency to sleep on. It is a humiliating position for a great country. Fundamentally, our position is sound, even if the technical position of sterling is weak. Our industries have shown a stronger resistance to the onslaught of the world trade depression than those in America. Our manufacturers, who specialise and "rationalise" their production, have proved that they can still win markets abroad. We have about £4,000,000,000 of long-term capital invested in foreign countries, against America's £3,000,000,000. But we have been overdoing the short-term loan business by borrowing cheaply from France and America and re-lending at a handsome profit to Germany and Austria. For this folly the London acceptance-houses are largely to blame. The net short-term indebtedness of London to foreigners is between £200,000,000 and £250,000,000. Obviously the technical position of sterling became precarious as soon as the foreign holder of sterling balances grew apprehensive of the effects of a possible German collapse on the London acceptance-houses.

* * *

The extension of a £50,000,000 credit to the Bank of England by the Bank of France and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York was designed to meet the immediate danger of a flight of foreign capital, but the publication of the alarmist "economy" report of the May Committee precipitated both a domestic and a foreign flight from sterling. The timid capitalist, thanks to the pegging of the sterling exchanges, was enabled to fly into dollars or francs without loss, and within a few weeks the £50,000,000 credit granted to the Bank of England was almost exhausted. So the New York bankers were in the position to say to the Bank of England that if we desired further credits we must get our budget balanced. It is futile, of course, for further credits to be extended if confidence in sterling is not restored. And if the confidence of the capitalist is not to be restored except by the balancing of the budget—then the budget has to be balanced—and in the way the capitalist desires, that is, by economies in social services, not by increases in direct taxation. The issue was plain and was plainly faced. The risk in not "capitulating" (if you like) to the financier's view was to see the pound sterling go to pot. Nevertheless, there was a possible alternative which would have involved some risk to the pound, but not too great a risk to be worth taking. This was, in part, Mr. Keynes' proposal for balancing the budget by suspending the Sinking Fund, borrowing for the Unemployment Fund and imposing indirect taxation, coupled with my own suggestion for a patriotic rally in the City for the voluntary conversion of 5 per cent. War Loan on to a 4 per cent. basis. A strong Government might have carried this defence of sterling through by threatening the foreign bankers with an Anglo-German renunciation of the gold standard and the domestic capitalist with a special tax on fixed interest securities and a prohibition of the export of capital. But it is no use pretending we had a strong Government.

* * *

What is likely to be the effect upon the security markets of the work of the National Government? The fundamentals, at least, are clear, even if we are still guessing at the details of the economy plans. The investor should read carefully the article by Mr. J. M. Keynes on "Some Consequences of the Economy Report" in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of August 15th. The National Government, by enforcing cuts in the dole and in salaries and wages where it can, presumably intends—to quote Mr. Keynes—"to make the Deflation effective." Hence the investor should adhere primarily to long-dated British Government stocks. (If the National Government were to break down, if the pound sterling were to depreciate in the exchange markets, in other words, if inflation were to appear on the horizon, the investor would, of course, be compelled to fly into "equity" stocks.) Assuming that the National Government pursues wholeheartedly the "economy" policy of the May Committee, a reduction in national purchasing power will follow, so that the profits of the consumption trades, catering for the home markets, will be badly affected. The investor should then discreetly retire from the "equity" holdings in such enterprises as brewing beer, manufacturing cigarettes, entertaining the public, furnishing houses, supplying personal wants of almost every description, except essential foods and clothing. If he could find an export industry whose costs are likely to be lowered as the result of the deflation, he might with advantage make this case an exception in his rule of avoiding British "equity" shares. As for the holder of 5 per cent. War Loan, the suggestion for a voluntary conversion scheme which I made last week to Mr. Snowden could be put forward with considerable weight by a National Government. After all, if the unemployed and the wage-earner are to be invited to make sacrifices, it would make for a more contented society if the receivers of fixed incomes from Government bonds were also asked to "do their bit," apart from the contributions which they make to the Exchequer by way of direct taxation. The immediate financial effect of a voluntary conversion of 5 per cent. War Loan on to a 4 per cent. basis would be a rise in long-dated British Government stocks and other "gilt-edged" securities. This would cheapen the cost of all new borrowing for sound industrial enterprises and would enable the Government to float a long-term loan abroad on favourable terms for the repayment of the foreign holders of 5 per cent. War Loan.

* * *

The scope for investment in foreign government bonds is being narrowed each month as the great slump progresses. Chile has now announced a complete default. Not only is she unable to secure the requisite foreign exchange wherewith to make payments abroad on her debt, but for the rest of this year she cannot even pay her debt interest in Chilean pesos, as she had hoped, into a special account at the Central Bank. In 1932 she hopes to balance her budget and to provide in Chilean currency for interest on the debt, though possibly not for amortisation. Whether the Chilean pesos can then be converted into foreign currencies depends upon the state of the export trade. This prospect is none too encouraging in view of the price-cutting war which seems certain to break out in the nitrogen markets. The Chilean Government was to have received £4,500,000 this year, less certain credits, as compensation from the National Nitrate Company, "Cosach," for the loss of the nitrate export tax. Unfortunately "Cosach" has only been able to issue £3,000,000 worth of bonds (in Europe). The National City Company, New York, which purchased $19,000,000 worth of "Cosach" dollar bonds for issue in New York, has not yet been able to float the loan. In respect of 1932 and 1933 the Chilean Government is to receive $40,149,000 from the issue of further "Cosach" bonds. It is small wonder that Chilean opinion has turned against the "Cosach" scheme, but omelettes cannot be unscrambled and Chile must follow where the Guggenheim Brothers lead. Argentine, Colombian, Venezuelan and possibly Uruguayan bonds stand out as the only surviving investments in South America. Argentina has just given further proof of her financial strength by paying off the $50,000,000 short-term loans due to American banks.

* * *

Regarding my recent comments on British film companies, a correspondent has written to ask my opinion of Associated Provincial Picture Houses, Ltd. This is a subsidiary of the Provincial Cinematograph Theatres and is blessed with a small but excellent circuit of cinema theatres. It has paid 10 per cent. for the past six years. For the year to March, 1930, it earned 14.1 per cent. The £1 ordinary shares at 15s. 7½d. return the attractive yield of 12.8 per cent., and I would prefer them to the ordinary shares of Associated British Cinemas, Provincial Cinematograph Theatres or Gaumont-British. But if the National Government is bent on reducing the national income, is this an appropriate season for the purchase of the "equity" shares of cinema theatres? Attendances at cinema theatres are already declining and who can be sure that the entertainment tax will not be doubled?

London Amusements

MATINEES

All at 2.30 p.m., unless otherwise stated.

ALDWYCH.	TURKEY TIME.	Wed. & Fri.
DALY'S.	FLORODORA.	Wed. and Sat.
DUKE OF YORK'S.	LONDON WALL.	W. & T.
GLOBE.	THE IMPROPER DUCHESS.	Wed. & Sat.
HIPPODROME.	STAND UP AND SING.	Wed. & Sat.
LYRIC.	AUTUMN CROCUS.	Wed. & Sat.
PHŒNIX.	LATE NIGHT FINAL.	Wed. & Thurs.
QUEEN'S.	BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE ST.	W. & S.
ROYALTY.	BLACK MAGIC.	Thurs., Sat., 3.
SAVOY.	MIDNIGHT LOVE.	Mon. & Thurs.
ST. MARTIN'S.	THE YOUNG IDEA.	Fri.
STRAND.	COUNSEL'S OPINION.	Th. & Sat. 2.30.
WHITEHALL.	TAKE A CHANCE.	Mon. & Sat.
WYNDHAM'S.	THE CASE OF THE FRIGHTENED LADY.	Wed. Thurs.

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